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ADVENTURES

OF

CAPTAIN BONNEVILLE.

ADVENTURES

OF

CAPTAIN BONNEVILLE,

OR

SCENES

BEYOND THE

ROCKY MOUNTAINS OF THE FAR WEST.

BY WASHINGTON IRVING,

AUTHOR OF

"THE SKETCH BOOK," "THE ALHAMBRA," "ASTORIA," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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ADVENTURES

OF

CAPTAIN BONNEVILLE.

CHAPTER I.

MEETING WITH HODGKISS—MISFORTUNES OF THE NEZ PERCES—SCHEMES OF KOSATO, THE RENEGADO—HIS FORAY INTO THE HORSE PRAIRIE—INVASION OF BLACKFEET—BLUE JOHN, AND HIS FORLORN HOPE—THEIR GENEROUS ENTERPRISE—THEIR FATE—CONSTERNATION AND DESPAIR OF THE VILLAGE—SOLEMN OBSEQUIES—ATTEMPT AT INDIAN TRADE—HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY'S MONOPOLY—ARRANGEMENTS FOR AUTUMN—BREAKING UP OF AN ENCAMPMENT.

HAVING now a pretty strong party, well armed and equipped, Captain Bonneville no longer felt the necessity of fortifying himself in the secret places and fastnesses of the moun-

tains; but sallied forth boldly into the Snake river plain, in search of his clerk, Hodgkiss, who had remained with the Nez Percés. He found him on the 24th of June, and learnt from him another chapter of misfortunes which had recently befallen that ill-fated race.

After the departure of Captain Bonneville, in March, Kosato, the renegade Blackfoot, had recovered from the wound received in battle; and with his strength revived all his deadly hostility to his native tribe. He now resumed his efforts to stir up the Nez Percés to reprisals upon their old enemies; reminding them incessantly of all the outrages and robberies they had recently experienced, and assuring them that such would continue to be their lot, until they proved themselves men by some signal retaliation.

The impassioned eloquence of the desperado, at length produced an effect; and a band of

braves enlisted under his guidance, to penetrate into the Blackfoot country, harass their villages, carry off their horses, and commit all kinds of depredations.

Kosato pushed forward on his foray, as far as the Horse prairie; where he came upon a strong party of Blackfeet. Without waiting to estimate their force, he attacked them with characteristic fury, and was bravely seconded by his followers. The contest, for a time, was hot and bloody: at length, as is customary with these two tribes, they paused, and held a long parley, or rather a war of words.

"What need," said the Blackfoot chief, tauntingly, "have the Nez Percés to leave their homes, and sally forth on war parties, when they have danger enough at their own doors? If you want fighting, return to your villages; you will have plenty of it there. The Blackfeet warriors have hitherto made war

upon you as children. They are now coming as men. A great force is at hand; they are on their way to your towns, and are determined to rub out the very name of the Nez Percés from the mountains. Return, I say, to your towns, and fight there, if you wish to live any longer as a people."

Kosato took him at his word; for he knew the character of his native tribe. Hastening back with his band to the Nez Percés village, he told all that he had seen and heard; and urged the most prompt and strenuous measures for defence. The Nez Percés, however, heard him with their accustomed phlegm: the threat of the Blackfeet had been often made, and as often had proved a mere bravado; such they pronounced it to be at present, and, of course, took no precautions.

They were soon convinced that it was no empty menace. In a few days, a band of three

hundred Blackfeet warriors appeared upon the hills. All now was consternation in the village. The force of the Nez Percés was too small to cope with the enemy in open fight; many of the young men having gone to their relatives on the Columbia to procure horses. The sages met in hurried council. What was to be done to ward off this impending blow which threatened annihilation?

In this moment of imminent peril and alarm, a Pierced-nosed chief, named Blue John by the whites, stepped forward and suggested a desperate plan, which he offered to conduct in person. It was, to approach secretly with a small, but chosen band, through a defile which led to the encampment of the enemy, and, by a sudden onset, to drive off the horses. Should this blow be successful, the spirit and strength of the invaders would be broken, and the Nez Percés, having horses, would be more than a

match for them. Should it fail, the village would not be worse off than at present, when destruction appeared inevitable.

Twenty-nine of the choicest warriors instantly volunteered to follow Blue John in this hazardous enterprise. They prepared for it with the solemnity and devotion peculiar to the tribe. Blue John consulted his medicine, or talismanic charm, such as every chief keeps in his lodge as a supernatural protection. The oracle assured him that his enterprise would be completely successful, provided no rain should fall before he had passed through the defile; but should it rain, his band would be utterly cut off.

The day was clear and bright; and Blue John anticipated that the skies would be propitious. He departed in high game spirit with his forlorn hope; and never did band of braves make a more gallant display: horsemen and horses

painted and decorated and equipped in the fiercest and most glaring style; glittering with arms and ornaments, and fluttering with feathers.

The weather continued serene, until they reached the defile; but just as they were entering it, a black cloud rose over the mountain crest, and there was a sudden shower. The warriors turned to their leader as if to read his opinion of this unlucky omen; but the countenance of Blue John remained unchanged, and they all continued to press forward. It was their hope to make their way, undiscovered, to the very vicinity of the Blackfoot camp: but they had not proceeded far in the defile, when they met a scouting party of the enemy. They attacked and drove them among the hills, and were pursuing them with great eagerness, when they heard shouts and yells behind them, and

beheld the main body of the Blackfeet advancing.

The second chief wavered a little at the sight, and proposed an instant retreat. "We came to fight!" replied Blue John, sternly. Then giving his war-whoop, he sprang forward to the conflict. His braves followed him. They made a headlong and desperate charge upon the enemy; not with the hope of victory, but the determination to sell their lives dearly.

A frightful carnage, rather than a regular battle, succeeded. The forlorn band laid heaps of their enemies dead at their feet, but were overwhelmed with numbers, and pressed into a gorge of the mountain, where they continued to fight until they were cut to pieces. One, only, of the thirty survived. He sprang on the horse of a Blackfoot warrior whom he had slain and escaping at full speed, brought home the baleful tidings to his village.

Who can paint the horror and desolation of the inhabitants? The flower of their warriors laid low, and a ferocious enemy at their doors. The air was rent by the shrieks and lamentations of the women, who, casting off their ornaments, and tearing their hair, wandered about, franticly bewailing the dead, and predicting destruction to the living.

The remaining warriors armed themselves for obstinate defence; but showed by their gloomy looks and sullen silence, that they considered defence hopeless. To their surprise, the Blackfeet refrained from pursuing their advantage: perhaps satisfied with the blood already shed, or disheartened by the loss they had themselves sustained. At any rate, they disappeared from the hills, and it was soon ascertained that they had returned to the Horse prairie.

The unfortunate Nez Percés now began once

more to breathe. A few of their warriors, taking packhorses, repaired to the defile to bring away the bodies of their slaughtered brethren. They found them mere headless trunks; and the wounds with which they were covered, showed how bravely they had fought. Their hearts, too, had been torn out and carried off; a proof of their signal valour: for in devouring the heart of a foe renowned for bravery, or who has distinguished himself in battle, the Indian victor thinks he appropriates to himself the courage of the deceased.

Gathering the mangled bodies of the slain, and strapping them across their packhorses, the warriors returned, in dismal procession, to the village. The tribe came forth to meet them; the women with piercing cries and wailings; the men with downcast countenances, in which gloom and sorrow seemed fixed as if in marble. The mutilated and almost undistinguishable

bodies were placed in rows upon the ground, in the midst of the assemblage; and the scene of heart-rending anguish and lamentation that ensued, would have confounded those who insist on Indian stoicism.

Such was the disastrous event that had overwhelmed the Nez Percés tribe, during the absence of Captain Bonneville: and he was informed that Kosato, the renegade, who, being stationed in the village, had been prevented from going on the forlorn hope, was again striving to rouse the vindictive feelings of his adopted brethren, and to prompt them to revenge the slaughter of their devoted braves.

During his sojourn on the Snake river plain, Captain Bonneville made one of his first essays at the strategy of the fur trade. There was at this time an assemblage of Nez Percés, Flatheads, and Cottonois Indians, encamped together upon the plain; well provided with

beaver, which they had collected during the spring. These they were waiting to traffic with a resident trader of the Hudson's Bay Company, who was stationed among them, and with whom they were accustomed to deal. As it happened, the trader was almost entirely destitute of Indian goods; his spring supply not having yet reached him.

Captain Bonneville had secret intelligence that the supplies were on the way, and would soon arrive; he hoped, however, by a prompt move, to anticipate their arrival and secure the market to himself. Throwing himself, therefore, among the Indians, he opened his packs of merchandise, and displayed the most tempting wares; bright cloths, and scarlet blankets, and glittering ornaments, and every thing gay and glorious in the eyes of warrior or squaw.

All, however, was in vain. The Hudson's

Bay trader was a perfect master of his business; thoroughly acquainted with the Indians he had to deal with, and held such control over them, that none dared to act openly in opposition to his wishes: nay, more—he came nigh turning the tables upon the captain, and shaking the allegiance of some of his free trappers, by distributing liquors among them. The latter, therefore, was glad to give up a competition, where the war was likely to be carried into his own camp.

In fact, the traders of the Hudson's Bay Company have advantages over all competitors in the trade beyond the Rocky mountains. That huge monopoly centres within itself not merely its own hereditary and long established power and influence; but also those of its ancient rival, but now integral part, the famous North-west Company. It has thus its races of traders, trappers, hunters, and voyageurs, born and

brought up in its service, and inheriting from preceding generations a knowledge and aptitude in every thing connected with Indian life, and Indian traffic.

In the process of years, this company has been enabled to spread its ramifications in every direction; its system of intercourse is founded upon a long and intimate knowledge of the character and necessities of the various tribes; and of all the fastnesses, defiles, and favourable hunting grounds of the country. Their capital, also, and the manner in which their supplies are distributed at various posts, or forwarded by regular caravans, keep their traders well supplied, and enable them to furnish their goods to the Indians at a cheap rate. Their men, too, being chiefly drawn from the Canadas, where they enjoy great influence and control, are engaged at the most trifling wages, and supported at little cost: the provisions which

they take with them being little more than Indian corn and grease. They are brought, also, into the most perfect discipline and subordination, especially when their leaders have once got them to their scene of action in the heart of the wilderness.

These circumstances combine to give the leaders of the Hudson's Bay Company a decided advantage over all the American companies that come within their range; so that any close competition with them is almost hopeless.

Shortly after Captain Bonneville's ineffectual attempt to participate in the trade of the associated camp, the supplies of the Hudson's Bay Company arrived; and the resident trader was enabled to monopolize the market.

It was now the beginning of July; in the latter part of which month, Captain Bonneville had appointed a rendezvous at Horse creek, in Green river valley, with some of the parties

which he had detached in the preceding year. He now turned his thoughts in that direction, and prepared for the journey.

The Cottonois were anxious for him to proceed at once to their country; which, they assured him, abounded in beaver. The lands of this tribe lie immediately north of those of the Flatheads, and are open to the inroads of the Blackfeet. It is true, the latter professed to be their allies; but they had been guilty of so many acts of perfidy, that the Cottonois had, latterly, renounced their hollow friendship, and attached themselves to the Flatheads and Nez Percés. These they had accompanied in their migrations, rather than remain alone at home, exposed to the outrages of the Blackfeet.

They were now apprehensive that these marauders would range their country during their absence, and destroy the beaver: this was their

reason for urging Captain Bonneville to make it his autumnal hunting ground. The latter, however, was not to be tempted: his engagements required his presence at the rendezvous in Green river valley; and he had already formed his ulterior plans.

An unexpected difficulty now arose. The free trappers suddenly made a stand, and declined to accompany him. It was a long and a weary journey: the route lay through Pierre's Hole, and other mountain passes infested by the Blackfeet, and recently the scenes of sanguinary conflicts. They were not disposed to undertake such unnecessary toils and dangers, when they had good and secure trapping grounds nearer at hand, on the head waters of Salmon river.

As these were free and independent fellows, whose will and whim were apt to be law—who had the whole wilderness before them,

"where to choose," and the trader of a rival company at hand, ready to pay for their services—it was necessary to bend to their wishes. Captain Bonneville fitted them out therefore, for the hunting ground in question; appointing Mr. Hodgkiss to act as their partisan, or leader, and fixing a rendezvous where he should meet them in the course of the ensuing winter. The brigade consisted of twenty-one free trappers, and four or five hired men as camp-keepers.

This was not the exact arrangement of a trapping party; which, when accurately organized, is composed of two-thirds trappers, whose duty leads them continually abroad in pursuit of game, and one-third camp-keepers; who cook, pack, and unpack; set up the tents, take care of the horses, and do all other duties usually consigned by the Indians to their women. This part of the

service is apt to be fulfilled by French creoles from Canada and the valley of the Mississippi.

In the mean time, the associated Indians having completed their trade, and received their supplies, were all ready to disperse in various directions. As there was a formidable band of Blackfeet just over a mountain to the north-east, by which Hodgkiss and his free trappers would have to pass; and as it was known that those sharp-sighted marauders had their scouts out, watching every movement of the encampments, so as to cut off stragglers, or weak detachments, Captain Bonneville prevailed upon the Nez Percés to accompany Hodgkiss and his party, until they should be beyond the range of the enemy.

The Cottonois, and the Pends Oreilles, determined to move together at the same

time; and to pass close under the mountain infested by the Blackfeet; while Captain Bonneville, with his party, was to strike in an opposite direction to the south-south-east, bending his course for Pierre's Hole, on his way to Green river.

Accordingly, on the 6th of July, all the camps were raised at the same moment; each party taking its separate route. The scene was wild and picturesque: the long lines of traders, trappers, and Indians, with their rugged, and fantastic dresses and accoutrements; their varied weapons, their innumerable horses, some under the saddle, some burthened with packages, others following in droves; all stretching in lengthening caravans across the vast landscape, and making for different points of the plains and mountains.

CHAPTER II.

PRECAUTIONS IN DANGEROUS DEFILES—TRAPPERS' MODE OF DEFENCE ON A PRAIRIE—A MYSTERIOUS VISITER—ARRIVAL IN GREEN RIVER VALLEY—ADVENTURES OF THE DETACHMENTS—THE FORLORN PARTISAN—HIS TALE OF DISASTERS.

As the route of Captain Bonneville lay through what was considered the most perilous part of all this region of dangers, he took all his measures with military skill, and observed the strictest circumspection. When

on the march, a small scouting party was always thrown in the advance, to reconnoitre the whole country through which they were to pass.

The encampments were selected with the greatest care, and a continual watch was kept up night and day. The horses were brought in and picketed at night, and at daybreak a party was sent out to scour the neighbourhood for half a mile round, beating up every grove and thicket that could give shelter to a lurking foe. When all was reported safe, the horses were cast loose and turned out to graze. Were such precautions generally observed by traders and hunters, we should not so often hear of parties being surprised by the Indians.

Having stated the military arrangements of the captain, we may here mention a mode of defence on the open prairie, which we

have heard from a veteran in the Indian trade.

When a party of trappers is on a journey with a convoy of goods or peltries, every man has three packhorses under his care; each horse laden with three packs. Every man is provided with a picket with an iron head, a mallet, and hobbles, or leathern fetters for the horses. The trappers proceed across the prairie in a long line; or sometimes three parallel lines, sufficiently distant from each other to prevent the packs from interfering. At an alarm, when there is no covert at hand, the line wheels so as to bring the front to the rear and form a circle. All then dismount, drive their pickets into the ground in the centre, fasten the horses to them, and hobble their fore legs, so that, in case of alarm, they cannot break away. They then unload them, and dispose of their packs as breastworks on the periphery of the circle; each

man having nine packs behind which to shelter himself.

In this promptly-formed fortress, they await the assault of the enemy, and are enabled to set large bands of Indians at defiance.

The first night of his march, Captain Bonneville encamped upon Henry's fork; an upper branch of Snake river, called after the first American trader that erected a fort beyond the mountains. About an hour after all hands had come to a halt, the clatter of hoofs was heard, and a solitary female, of the Nez Percé tribe, came galloping up. She was mounted on a mestang or half wild horse, which she managed with a long rope hitched round the under jaw by way of bridle. Dismounting, she walked silently into the midst of the camp, and there seated herself on the ground, still holding her horse by the long halter.

The sudden and lonely apparition of this

woman, and her calm, yet resolute demeanour, awakened universal curiosity. The hunters and trappers gathered round, and gazed on her as something mysterious. She remained silent, but maintained her air of calmness and self-possession.

Captain Bonneville approached and interrogated her as to the object of her mysterious visit. Her answer was brief but earnest—"I love the whites—I will go with them." She was forthwith invited to a lodge, of which she readily took possession, and from that time forward was considered one of the camp.

In consequence, very probably, of the military precautions of Captain Bonneville, he conducted his party in safety through this hazardous region. No accident of a disastrous kind occurred, excepting the loss of a horse, which, in passing along the giddy edge of the precipice, called the Cornice, a dangerous pass

between Jackson's and Pierre's Hole, fell over the brink and was dashed to pieces.

On the 13th of July (1833), Captain Bonneville arrived at Green river. As he entered the valley, he beheld it strewed in every direction with the carcasses of buffaloes. It was evident that Indians had recently been there, and in great numbers. Alarmed at this sight, and fearing that all was not well, he came to a halt, and as soon as it was dark, sent out spies to his place of rendezvous on Horse creek, where he had expected to meet with his detached parties of trappers on the following day.

Early in the morning the spies made their appearance in the camp, and with them came three trappers of one of his bands, from the rendezvous, who told him his people were all there expecting him. As to the slaughter among the buffaloes, it had been made by a friendly band of Shoshonies, who had fallen in

with one of his trapping parties, and accompanied them to the rendezvous.

Having imparted this intelligence, the three worthies from the rendezvous broached a small keg of "alcohol" which they had brought with them, to enliven this merry meeting. The liquor went briskly round; all absent friends were toasted, and the party moved forward to the rendezvous in high spirits.

The meeting of associated bands who have been separated from each other on these hazardous enterprises, is always interesting; each having its tale of perils and adventures to relate. Such was the case with the various detachments of Captain Bonneville's company, thus brought together on Horse creek. Here was the detachment of fifty men which he had sent from Salmon river, in the preceding month of November, to winter on Snake river. They had met with many crosses and losses in the

course of their spring hunt, not so much from Indians as from white men. They had come in competition with rival trapping parties, particularly one belonging to the Rocky Mountain Fur Company; and they had long stories to relate of their manœuvres to forestal or distress each other. In fact, in these virulent and sordid competitions, the trappers of each party were more intent upon injuring their rivals, than benefiting themselves; breaking each other's traps, trampling and tearing to pieces the beaver lodges, and doing every thing in their power to mar the success of the hunt. We forbear to detail these pitiful contentions.

The most lamentable tale of disasters, however, that Captain Bonneville had to hear, was from a partisan, whom he had detached in the preceding year, with twenty men, to hunt through the outskirts of the Crow country, and on the tributary streams of the Yellow-

stone; from whence he was to proceed and join him in his winter quarters on Salmon river. This partisan appeared at the rendezvous without his party, and a sorrowful tale of disasters had he to relate.

In hunting the Crow country, he fell in with a village of that tribe; notorious rogues, jockeys, and horse stealers, and errant scamperers of the mountains. These decoyed most of his men to desert, and carry off horses, traps, and accoutrements; and when he attempted to retake the deserters, the Crow warriors ruffled up to him, declared the deserters were their good friends, had determined to remain among them, and should not be molested.

The poor partisan, therefore, was fain to leave his vagabonds among these birds of their own feather, and, being too weak in numbers to attempt the dangerous pass across the mountains to meet Captain Bonneville on Salmon

river, he made, with the few that remained faithful to him, for the neighbourhood of Tullock's fort, on the Yellowstone, under the protection of which he went into winter quarters.

He soon found out that the neighbourhood of the fort was nearly as bad as the neighbourhood of the Crows. His men were continually stealing away thither, with whatever beaver skins they could secrete or lay their hands on. These they would exchange with the hangers-on of the fort for whiskey, and then revel in drunkenness and debauchery.

The unlucky partisan made another move. Associating with his party a few free trappers, whom he met with in this neighbourhood, he started off early in the spring to trap on the head waters of the Powder river. In the course of the journey, his horses were so much jaded in traversing a steep mountain, that he was

induced to turn them loose to graze during the night. The place was lonely; the pass was rugged; there was not the sign of an Indian in the neighbourhood; not a blade of grass that had been turned by a footstep.

But who can calculate on security in the midst of the Indian country, where the foe lurks in silence and secrecy, and seems to come and go on the wings of the wind? The horses had scarce been turned loose, when a couple of Arickara (or Rickaree) warriors entered the camp. They affected a frank and friendly demeanour; but their appearance and movements awakened the suspicions of some of the veteran trappers, well versed in Indian wiles. Convinced that they were spies sent on some sinister errand, they took them into custody, and set to work to drive in the horses. It was too late—the horses were already gone. In fact, a war party of Arickaras had been hover-

ing on their trail for several days, watching with the patience and perseverance of Indians, for some moment of negligence and fancied security, to make a successful swoop. The two spies had evidently been sent into the camp to create a diversion, while their confederates carried off the spoil.

The unlucky partisan, thus robbed of his horses, turned furiously on his prisoners, ordered them to be bound hand and foot, and swore to put them to death unless his property were restored. The robbers, who soon found that their spies were in captivity, now made their appearance on horseback, and held a parley. The sight of them, mounted on the very horses they had stolen, set the blood of the mountaineers in a ferment; but it was useless to attack them, as they would have but to turn their steeds and scamper out of the reach of pedestrians.

A negotiation was now attempted. The Arickaras offered what they considered fair terms; to barter one horse, or even two horses, for a prisoner. The mountaineers spurned at their offer, and declared that, unless all the horses were relinquished, the prisoners should be burnt to death. To give force to their threat a pyre of logs and fagots was heaped up and kindled into a blaze.

The parley continued; the Arickaras released one horse and then another, in earnest of their proposition; finding, however, that nothing short of the relinquishment of all their spoils would purchase the lives of the captives, they abandoned them to their fate, moving off with many parting words and lamentable howlings. The prisoners seeing them depart, and knowing the horrible fate that awaited them, made a desperate effort to escape. They partially succeeded, but were severely wounded and retaken;

then dragged to the blazing pyre, and burnt to death in the sight of their retreating comrades.

Such are the savage cruelties that white men learn to practise, who mingle in savage life; and such are the acts that lead to terrible recrimination on the part of the Indians. Should we hear of any atrocities committed by the Arickaras upon captive white men, let this signal and recent provocation be borne in mind. Individual cases of the kind dwell in the recollections of whole tribes; and it is a point of honour and conscience to revenge them.

The loss of his horses completed the ruin of the unlucky partisan. It was out of his power to prosecute his hunting, or to maintain his party; the only thought now was how to get back to civilized life. At the first water course, his men built canoes and committed themselves to the stream. Some engaged themselves at

various trading establishments at which they touched, others got back to the settlements.

As to the partisan, he found an opportunity to make his way to the rendezvous at Green river valley; which he reached in time to render Captain Bonneville this forlorn account of his misadventures.

CHAPTER III.

GATHERING IN GREEN RIVER VALLEY—VISITINGS AND FEASTINGS OF LEADERS—ROUGH WASSAILING AMONG THE TRAPPERS — WILD BLADES OF THE MOUNTAINS—INDIAN BELLES—POTENCY OF BRIGHT BEADS AND RED BLANKETS—ARRIVAL OF SUPPLIES—REVELRY AND EXTRAVAGANCE—MAD WOLVES—THE LOST INDIAN.

The Green river valley was at this time the scene of one of those general gatherings of traders, trappers, and Indians, that we have already mentioned. The three rival companies, which, for a year past had been endeavouring

to out-trade, out-trap, and outwit each other, were here encamped in close proximity, awaiting their annual supplies. About four miles from the rendezvous of Captain Bonneville was that of the American Fur Company, hard by which, was that also of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company.

After the eager rivalry and almost hostility displayed by these companies in their late campaigns, it might be expected that, when thus brought in juxtaposition, they would hold themselves warily and sternly aloof from each other, and, should they happen to come in contact, brawl and bloodshed would ensue.

No such thing! Never did rival lawyers, after a wrangle at the bar, meet with more social goodhumour at a circuit dinner. The hunting season over, all past tricks and manœuvres are forgotten, all feuds and bickerings buried in oblivion. From the middle of June to the

middle of September, all trapping is suspended; for the beavers are then shedding their furs, and their skins are of little value. This, then, is the trapper's holiday, when he is all for fun and frolic, and ready for a saturnalia among the mountains.

At the present season, too, all parties were in good-humour. The year had been productive. Competition, by threatening to lessen their profits, had quickened their wits, roused their energies, and made them turn every favourable chance to the best advantage; so that, on assembling at their respective places of rendezvous, each company found itself in possession of a rich stock of peltries.

The leaders of the different companies, therefore, mingled on terms of perfect good fellowship; interchanging visits, and regaling each other in the best style their respective camps afforded. But the rich treat for the worthy

captain was to see the "chivalry" of the various encampments, engaged in contests of skill at running, jumping, wrestling, shooting with the rifle, and running horses. And then their rough hunters' feastings and carousals. They drank together, they sang, they laughed, they whooped; they tried to outbrag and outlie each other in stories of their adventures and achievements. Here the free trappers were in all their glory; they considered themselves the "cocks of the walk," and always carried the highest crests. Now and then familiarity was pushed too far, and would effervesce into a brawl, and a "rough and tumble" fight; but it all ended in cordial reconciliation and maudlin endearment.

The presence of the Shoshonie tribe contributed occasionally to cause temporary jealousies and feuds. The Shoshonie beauties became objects of rivalry among some of

the amorous mountaineers. Happy was the trapper who could muster up a red blanket, a string of gay beads, or a paper of precious vermilion, with which to win the smiles of a Shoshonie fair one.

The caravans of supplies arrived at the valley just at this period of gallantry and good fellowship. Now commenced a scene of eager competition and wild prodigality at the different encampments. Bales were hastily ripped open, and all their motley contents poured forth. A mania for purchasing spread itself throughout the several bands, —munitions for war, for hunting, for gallantry, were seized upon with equal avidity —rifles, hunting knives, traps, scarlet cloth, red blankets, garish beads, and glittering trinkets, were bought at any price, and scores run up without any thought how they were

ever to be rubbed off. The free trappers, especially, were extravagant in their purchases. For a free mountaineer to pause at any paltry consideration of dollars and cents, in the attainment of any object that might strike his fancy, would stamp him with the mark of the beast in the estimation of his comrades. For a trader to refuse one of these free and flourishing blades a credit, whatever unpaid scores might stare him in the face, would be a flagrant affront scarcely to be forgiven.

Now succeeded another outbreak of revelry and extravagance. The trappers were newly fitted out and arrayed; and dashed about with their horses caparisoned in Indian style. The Shoshonie beauties also flaunted about in all the colours of the rainbow. Every freak of prodigality was indulged to

its full extent, and in a little while most of the trappers having squandered away all their wages, and perhaps run knee deep in debt, were ready for another hard campaign in the wilderness.

During this season of folly and frolic, there was an alarm of mad wolves in the two lower camps. One or more of these animals entered the camps for three nights successively, and bit several of the people.

Captain Bonneville relates the case of an Indian, who was a universal favourite in the lower camp. He had been bitten by one of these animals. Being out with a party shortly afterwards, he grew silent and gloomy, and lagged behind the rest as if he wished to leave them. They halted and urged him to move faster, but he entreated them not to approach him, and, leaping from his horse,

began to roll franticly on the earth, gnashing his teeth and foaming at the mouth. Still he retained his senses, and warned his companions not to come near him, as he should not be able to restrain himself from biting them. They hurried off to obtain relief; but on their return he was nowhere to be found. His horse and his accoutrements remained upon the spot. Three or four days afterwards, a solitary Indian, believed to be the same, was observed crossing a valley, and pursued; but he darted away into the fastnesses of the mountains, and was seen no more.

Another instance we have from a different person who was present in the encampment. One of the men of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company had been bitten. He set out shortly afterwards, in company with two white men, on his return to the settlements. In the

course of a few days he showed symptoms of hydrophobia, and became raving towards night. At length breaking away from his companions he rushed into a thicket of willows, where they left him to his fate!

CHAPTER IV.

SCHEMES OF CAPTAIN BONNEVILLE — THE GREAT SALT LAKE — EXPEDITION TO EXPLORE IT—PREPARATIONS FOR A JOURNEY TO THE BIGHORN.

Captain Bonneville now found himself at the head of a hardy, well seasoned, and well appointed company of trappers, all benefited by at least one year's experience among the mountains, and capable of protecting themselves from Indian wiles and stratagems, and of providing for their sub-

sistence wherever game was to be found. He had, also, an excellent troop of horses, in prime condition and fit for hard service. He now determined, therefore, to strike out into some of the bolder parts of his scheme. One of these was to carry his expeditions into some of the unknown tracts of the far west, beyond what is generally termed the buffalo range. This would have something of the merit and charm of discovery, so dear to every brave and adventurous spirit. Another favourite project with him was to establish a trading post on the lower part of the Columbia river, near the Multnomah valley, and to endeavour to retrieve for his country some of the lost trade of Astoria.

The first of theabove mentioned views was, at present, uppermost in his mind — the exploring of unknown regions. Among the grand features of the stupendous wilder-

ness about which he was roaming, is one which appears to have made a vivid impression on his mind, and to have been clothed by his imagination with vague and ideal charms. This is a great lake of salt water, which laves the feet of the mountains, but, extends far to the west-south-west, into one of those vast and elevated plateaus of land, which range high above the level of the Pacific.

Captain Bonneville gives a striking account of the lake when seen from the land. "As you ascend the mountains about its shores," says he, "you behold this immense body of water spreading itself before you, and stretching further and further, in one wide and far-reaching expanse, until the eye, wearied with continued and strained attention, rests in the blue dimness of distance, upon lofty ranges of mountains,

confidently asserted to rise from the bosom of the waters. Nearer to you, the smooth and unruffled surface is studded with little islands, where the mountain sheep roam in considerable numbers. What extent of lowland may be encompassed by the high peaks beyond, must remain for the present matter of mere conjecture; though from the form of the summits, and the breaks which may be discovered among them, there can be little doubt that they are the sources of streams calculated to water large tracts, which are probably concealed from view from the rotundity of the lake's surface. At some future day, in all probability, the rich harvest of beaver fur, which may be reasonably anticipated in such a spot, will tempt adventurers to reduce all this doubtful region to the palpable certainty of a beaten track. At present, however, destitute of the means of making

boats, the trapper stands upon the shore, and gazes upon a promised land which his feet are never to tread."

Such is the somewhat fanciful view which Captain Bonneville gives of this great body of water. He has evidently taken part of his ideas concerning it from the representations of others, who have somewhat exaggerated its features. It is reported to be about one hundred and fifty miles long, and fifty miles broad. The ranges of mountain peaks which Captain Bonneville speaks of, as rising from its bosom, are probably the summits of mountains beyond it, which may be visible at a vast distance, when viewed from an eminence, in the transparent atmosphere of these lofty regions. Several large islands certainly exist in the lake; one of which is said to be mountainous, but not by any means to the extent required to furnish the series of peaks above mentioned.

Captain Sublette, in one of his early expeditions across the mountains, is said to have sent four men in a skin canoe, to explore the lake, who professed to have navigated all around it; but to have suffered excessively from thirst, the water of the lake being extremely salt, and there being no fresh streams running into it.

Captain Bonneville doubts this report, or that the men accomplished the circumnavigation, because, he says, the lake receives several large streams from the mountains which bound it to the east. In the spring, when these streams are swollen by rain and by the melting of the snows, the lake rises several feet above its ordinary level; during the summer, it gradually subsides again, leaving a sparkling zone of the finest salt upon its shores.

The elevation of the vast plateau on which this lake is situated, is estimated by Captain Bonneville at one and three-fourths of a mile

above the level of the ocean. The admirable purity and transparency of the atmosphere, in this region, allowing objects to be seen, and the report of fire-arms to be heard, at an astonishing distance; and its extreme dryness, causing the wheels of waggons to fall to pieces, as instanced in former passages of this work, are proofs of the great altitude of the Rocky mountain plains. That a body of salt water should exist at such a height, is cited as a singular phenomenon by Captain Bonneville, though the salt lake of Mexico is not much inferior in elevation.*

To have this lake properly explored, and all

* The lake of Tezcuco, which surrounds the city of Mexico, the largest and lowest of the five lakes on the Mexican plateau, and the one most impregnated with saline particles, is seven thousand four hundred and sixty-eight feet, or nearly one mile and a half above the level of the sea.

its secrets revealed, was the grand scheme of the captain for the present year; and while it was one in which his imagination evidently took a leading part, he believed it would be attended with great profit, from the numerous beaver streams with which the lake must be fringed.

This momentous undertaking he confided to his lieutenant, Mr. Walker, in whose experience and ability he had great confidence. He instructed him to keep along the shores of the lake, and trap in all the streams on his route. He was also to keep a journal, and minutely to record the events of his journey, and every thing curious or interesting, making maps or charts of his route, and of the surrounding country.

No pains nor expense were spared in fitting out the party of which he was to take command, which was composed of forty men. They had

complete supplies for a year, and were to meet Captain Bonneville in the ensuing summer, in the valley of Bear river, the largest tributary of the Salt lake, which was to be his point of general rendezvous.

The next care of Captain Bonneville, was to arrange for the safe transportation of the peltries which he had collected, to the Atlantic states. The conducting of the convoy was to be undertaken by Mr. Cerré; it was necessary to fix upon the route by which he should proceed.

Mr. Robert Campbell, the partner of Sublette, was at this time in the rendezvous of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, having brought up their supplies. He was about to set off on his return, with the peltries collected during the year, and intended to proceed through the Crow country, to the head of navigation on the Bighorn river, and to descend in boats down

that river, the Missouri, and the Yellowstone, to St. Louis.

Captain Bonneville determined to forward his peltries by the same route. To accompany Cerré to the point of embarkation, and then to make an autumnal hunt in the Crow country.

CHAPTER V.

THE CROW COUNTRY—A CROW PARADISE—HABITS OF THE CROWS—ANECDOTES OF ROSE, THE RENEGADE WHITE MAN—HIS FIGHTS WITH THE BLACKFEET—HIS ELEVATION—HIS DEATH—ARAPOOISH, THE CROW CHIEF—HIS EAGLE—ADVENTURE OF ROBERT CAMPBELL—HONOUR AMONG CROWS.

BEFORE we accompany Captain Bonneville into the Crow country, we will impart a few facts about this wild region, and the wild people who inhabit it. We are not aware of the precise boundaries, if there are any, of the country

claimed by the Crows; it appears to extend from the Black hills to the Rocky mountains, including a part of their lofty ranges, and embracing many of the plains and valleys watered by the Wind river, the Yellowstone, the Powder river, the little Missouri, and the Nebraska. The country varies in soil and climate; there are vast plains of sand and clay, studded with large red sand-hills: other parts are grand and picturesque: it possesses warm springs, and coal-mines, and abounds with game.

But let us give the account of the country as rendered by Arapooish, a Crow chief, to Mr. Robert Campbell, of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company.

"The Crow country," said he, "is a good country. The Great Spirit has put it exactly in the right place; while you are in it you fare well, whenever you go out of it, which ever way you travel, you will fare worse.

"If you go to the south, there you have to wander over great barren plains; the water is warm and bad, and you meet the fever and ague.

"To the north it is cold; the winters are long and bitter, and no grass; you cannot keep horses there, but must travel with dogs. What is a country without horses!

"On the Columbia they are poor and dirty, paddle about in canoes, and eat fish. Their teeth are worn out; they are always taking fishbones out of their mouths. Fish is poor food.

"To the east, they dwell in villages; they live well; but they drink the muddy water of the Missouri—that is bad. A Crow's dog would not drink such water.

"About the forks of the Missouri is a fine country; good water; good grass; plenty of buffalo. In summer, it is almost as good as

the Crow country: but in winter it is cold; the grass is gone; and there is no salt weed for the horses.

"The Crow country is exactly in the right place. It has snowy mountains and sunny plains; all kinds of climates and good things for every season. When the summer heats scorch the prairies, you can draw up under the mountains, where the air is sweet and cool, the grass fresh, and the bright streams come tumbling out of the snow banks. There you can hunt the elk, the deer, and the antelope, when their skins are fit for dressing; there you will find plenty of white bears and mountain sheep.

"In the autumn, when your horses are fat and strong from the mountain pastures, you can go down into the plains and hunt the buffalo, or trap beaver on the streams. And when winter comes on, you can take shelter in the

woody bottoms along the rivers; there you will find buffalo meat for yourselves, and cotton-wood bark for your horses: or you may winter in the Wind river valley, where there is salt weed in abundance.

"The Crow country is exactly in the right place. Every thing good is to be found there. There is no country like the Crow country."

Such is the eulogium on his country by Arapooish.

We have had repeated occasions to speak of the restless and predatory habits of the Crows. They can muster fifteen hundred fighting men; but their incessant wars with the Blackfeet, and their vagabond, predatory habits, are gradually wearing them out.

In a recent work, we related a circumstance of a white man named Rose, an outlaw, and a designing vagabond, who acted as guide and

interpreter to Mr. Hunt and his party, on their journey across the mountains to Astoria; who came near betraying them into the hands of the Crows, and who remained among the tribe, marrying one of their women, and adopting their congenial habits.*

A few anecdotes of the subsequent fortunes of that renegado may not be uninteresting, especially as they are connected with the fortunes of the tribe.

Rose was powerful in frame and fearless in spirit: and soon by his daring deeds took his rank among the first braves of the tribe. He aspired to command, and knew it was only to be attained by desperate exploits. He distinguished himself in repeated actions with the Blackfeet. On one occasion, a band of those savages had fortified themselves within a breast-

* See Astoria, vol. i.

work, and could not be harmed. Rose proposed to storm the work.

"Who will take the lead?" was the demand.

"I!" cried he; and putting himself at their head, rushed forward.

The first Blackfoot that opposed him, he shot down with his rifle, and, snatching up the war-club of his victim, killed four others within the fort. The victory was complete, and Rose returned to the Crow village covered with glory, and bearing five Blackfoot scalps, to be erected as a trophy before his lodge.

From this time, he was known among the Crows by the name of Che-ku-kaats, or, "the man who killed five." He became chief of the village, or rather band, and for a time was the popular idol. His popularity soon awakened envy among the native braves; he was a stranger, an intruder, a white man. A party seceded

from his command. Feuds and civil wars succeeded for two or three years, until Rose, having contrived to set his adopted brethren by the ears left them, and went down the Missouri in 1823.

Here he fell in with one of the earliest trapping expeditions sent by General Ashley across the mountains. It was conducted by Smith, Fitzpatrick, and Sublette. Rose enlisted with them as guide and interpreter. When he got them among the Crows, he was exceedingly generous with their goods; making presents to the braves of his adopted tribe, as became a high-minded chief.

This, doubtless, helped to revive his popularity. In that expedition, Smith and Fitzpatrick were robbed of their horses in Green river valley; the place where the robbery took place still bears the name of Horse creek. We are not informed whether the horses were stolen

through the instigation of Rose: it is not improbable, for such was the perfidy he had intended to practise on a former occasion towards Mr. Hunt and his party.

The last anecdote we have of Rose is from an Indian trader. When General Atkinson made his military expedition up the Missouri, in 1825, to protect the fur trade, he held a conference with the Crow nation, at which Rose figured as Indian dignitary and Crow interpreter. The military were stationed at some little distance from the scene of the "big talk;" while the general and the chiefs were smoking pipes and making speeches, the officers, supposing all was friendly, left the troops, and drew near the scene of ceremonial. Some of the more knowing Crows, perceiving this, stole quietly to the camp, and, unobserved, contrived to stop the touch-holes of the field-pieces with dirt.

Shortly after, a misunderstanding occurred in

the conference: some of the Indians, knowing the cannon to be useless, became insolent. A tumult arose. In the confusion, Colonel O'Fallan snapped a pistol in the face of a brave, and knocked him down with the butt end. The Crows were all in a fury. A chance medley fight was on the point of taking place, when Rose, his natural sympathies as a white man suddenly recurring, broke the stock of his fusee over the head of a Crow warrior, and laid so vigorously about him with the barrel, that he soon put the whole throng to flight. Luckily, as no lives had been lost, this sturdy ribroasting calmed the fury of the Crows, and the tumult ended without serious consequences.

What was the ultimate fate of this vagabond hero is not distinctly known. Some report him to have fallen a victim to disease, brought on by his licentious life; others assert that he was murdered in a feud among

the Crows. After all, his residence among these savages, and the influence he acquired over them, had for a time, some beneficial effects. He is said, not merely to have rendered them more formidable to the Blackfeet, but to have opened their eyes to the policy of cultivating the friendship of the white men.

After Rose's death, his policy continued to be cultivated with indifferent success, by Arapooish, the chief already mentioned, who had been his great friend, and whose character he had contributed to develop. This sagacious chief endeavoured on every occasion, to restrain the predatory propensities of his tribe when directed against the white men.

"If we keep friends with them," said he, "we have nothing to fear from the Blackfeet, and can rule the mountains."

Arapooish pretended to be a great "medicine man;" a character among the Indians which is a compound of priest, doctor, prophet, and conjurer. He carried about with him a tame eagle, as his "medicine" or familiar. With the white men, he acknowledged that this was all charlatanism; but said it was necessary, to give him weight and influence among his people.

Mr. Robert Campbell, from whom we have most of these facts, in the course of one of his trapping expeditions was quartered in the village of Arapooish, and a guest in the lodge of the chieftain. He had collected a large quantity of furs, and, fearful of being plundered, he deposited but a part in the lodge of the chief; the rest he buried in a cache. One night, Arapooish came into the lodge with a cloudy brow, and seated himself for a time without saying a word.

At length, turning to Campbell, "You have more furs with you," said he, "than you have brought into my lodge."

"I have," replied Campbell.

"Where are they?"

Campbell knew the uselessness of any prevarication with an Indian; and the importance of complete frankness. He described the exact place where he had concealed his peltries.

"'Tis well," replied Arapooish; "you speak straight. It is just as you say. But your cache has been robbed. Go and see how many skins have been taken from it."

Campbell examined the cache, and estimated his loss to be about one hundred and fifty beaver skins.

Arapooish now summoned a meeting of the village. He bitterly reproached his people for robbing a stranger who had confided

to their honour; and commanded that whoever had taken the skins, should bring them back: declaring that, as Campbell was his guest and an inmate of his lodge, he would not eat or drink until every skin was restored to him.

The meeting broke up, and every one dispersed. Arapooish now charged Campbell to give neither reward nor thanks to any one who should bring in the beaver skins, but to keep count as they were delivered.

In a little while the skins began to make their appearance, a few at a time; they were laid down in the lodge, and those who brought them departed without saying a word. The day passed away. Arapooish sat in one corner of his lodge, wrapped up in his robe, scarcely moving a muscle of his countenance. When night arrived, he demanded if all the skins had been brought in. Above a hundred had been

given up, and Campbell expressed himself contented.

Not so the Crow chieftain. He fasted all that night, nor tasted a drop of water. In the morning, some more skins were brought in, and continued to come, one and two at a time, throughout the day: until but a few were wanting to make the number complete. Campbell was now anxious to put an end to this fasting of the old chief, and again declared that he was perfecty satisfied. Arapooish demanded what number of skins were yet wanting. On being told, he whispered to some of his people, who disappeared. After a time the number were brought in, though it was evident they were not any of the skins that had been stolen but others gleaned in the village.

"Is all right now?" demanded Arapooish.

"All is right," replied Campbell.

"Good! Now bring me meat and drink!"

When they were alone together, Arapooish had a conversation with his guest.

"When you come another time among the Crows," said he, "don't hide your goods: trust to them and they will not wrong you. Put your goods in the lodge of a chief, and they are sacred; hide them in a cache, and any one who finds will steal them. My people have now given up your goods for my sake; but there are some foolish young men in the village, who may be disposed to be troublesome. Don't linger, therefore, but pack your horses and be off."

Campbell took his advice, and made his way safely out of the Crow country. He has ever since maintained, that the Crows are not so black as they are painted. "Trust to their honour," says he, "and you are safe: trust to their honesty and they will steal the hair off of your head."

Having given these few preliminary particulars, we will resume the course of our narrative.

CHAPTER VI.

DEPARTURE FROM GREEN RIVER VALLEY—POPO AGIE—ITS COURSE—THE RIVERS INTO WHICH IT RUNS—SCENERY OF THE BLUFFS—THE GREAT TAR SPRING—VOLCANIC TRACTS IN THE CROW COUNTRY—BURNING MOUNTAIN OF POWDER RIVER—SULPHUR SPRINGS—HIDDEN FIRES—COLTER'S HELL—WIND RIVER—CAMPBELL'S PARTY—FITZPATRICK AND HIS TRAPPERS—CAPTAIN STEWART, AN AMATEUR TRAVELLER—CAPTAIN WYETH—ANECDOTES OF HIS EXPEDITION TO THE FAR WEST—DISASTER OF CAMPBELL'S PARTY—A UNION OF BANDS—THE BAD PASS—THE RAPIDS—DEPARTURE OF FITZPATRICK—EMBARKATION OF PELTRIES—CAPTAIN WYETH AND HIS BULL BOAT—ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN BONNEVILLE IN THE BIGHORN MOUNTAINS—ADVENTURES IN THE PLAIN—TRACES OF INDIANS—TRAVELLING PRECAUTIONS—DANGERS OF MAKING A SMOKE—THE RENDEZVOUS.

On the 25th of July, Captain Bonneville struck his tents, and set out on his route for the Bighorn: at the head of a party of fifty-six

men, including those who were to embark with Cerré. Crossing the Green river valley, he proceeded along the south point of the Wind river range of mountains, and soon fell upon the track of Mr. Robert Campbell's party, which had preceded him by a day. This he pursued, until he perceived that it led down the banks of the Sweet Water to the south-east.

As this was different from his proposed direction, he left it; and turning to the north-east, soon came upon the waters of the Popo Agie. This stream takes its rise in the Wind river mountains. Its name, like most Indian names, is characteristic. *Popo* in the Crow language, signifying head; and *Agie,* river. It is the head of a long river, extending from the south end of the Wind river mountains in a north-east direction, until it falls into the Yellow-stone. Its course is generally through plains,

but is twice crossed by chains of mountains; the first called the Littlehorn; the second, the Bighorn. After it has forced its way through the first chain, it is called the Horn river; after the second chain, it is called the Bighorn river. Its passage through this last chain is rough and violent; making repeated falls, and rushing down long and furious rapids, which threaten destruction to the navigator; though a hardy trapper is said to have shot down them in a canoe. At the foot of these rapids, is the head of navigation; where it was the intention of the parties to construct boats, and embark.

Proceeding down along the Popo Agie, Captain Bonneville came again in full view of the "Bluffs," as they are called, extending from the base of the Wind river mountains far away to the east, and presenting to the eye a confusion of hills and cliffs of red sandstone: some peaked and angular; some round; some broken

into crags and precipices, and piled up in fantastic masses; but all naked and steril. There appeared to be no soil favourable to vegetation; nothing but coarse gravel: yet, over all this isolated, barren landscape, were diffused such atmospherical tints and hues, as to blend the whole into harmony and beauty.

In this neighbourhood, the captain made search for "the great Tar spring," one of the wonders of the mountains; the medicinal properties of which, he had heard extravagantly lauded by the trappers. After a toilsome search, he found it at the foot of a sandbluff, a little to the east of the Wind river mountains; where it exuded in a small stream of the colour and consistency of tar. The men immediately hastened to collect a quantity of it, to use as an ointment for the galled backs of their horses, and as a balsam for their own pains and aches. From the description given of it, it is evidently

the bituminous oil, called petroleum, or naphtha, which forms a principal ingredient in the potent medicine called British Oil. It is found in various parts of Europe and Asia, in several of the West India islands, and in some places of the United States. In the state of New York, it is called Seneca Oil, from being found near the Seneca lake.

The Crow country has other natural curiosities, which are held in superstitious awe by the Indians, and considered great marvels by the trappers. Such is the Burning mountain, on Powder river, abounding with anthracite coal. Here the earth is hot and cracked; in many places emitting smoke and sulphurous vapours, as if covering concealed fires. A volcanic tract of similar character is found on Stinking river, one of the tributaries of the Bighorn, which takes its unhappy name from the odour derived from sulphurous springs and streams.

This lastmentioned place was first discovered by Colter, a hunter belonging to Lewis and Clarke's exploring party, who came upon it in the course of his lonely wanderings, and gave such an account of its gloomy terrors; its hidden fires, smoking pits, noxious steams, and the all-pervading "smell of brimstone," that it received, and has ever since retained among trappers, the name of "Colter's Hell!"

Resuming his descent along the left bank of the Popo Agie, Captain Bonneville soon reached the plains; where he found several large streams entering from the west. Among these was Wind river, which gives its name to the mountains among which it takes its rise. This is one of the most important streams of the Crow country. The river being much swollen, Captain Bonneville halted at its mouth, and sent out scouts to look for a fording place.

While thus encamped, he beheld, in the

course of the afternoon, a long line of horsemen descending the slope of the hills on the opposite side of the Popo Agie. His first idea was, that they were Indians: he soon discovered, however, that they were white men; and, by the long line of packhorses, ascertained them to be the convoy of Campbell, which, having descended the Sweet Water, was now on its way to the Horn river.

The two parties came together two or three days afterwards, on the 4th of August, after having passed through the gap of the Littlehorn mountain. In company with Campbell's convoy, was a trapping party of the Rocky Mountain Company, headed by Fitzpatrick; who, after Campbell's embarkation on the Bighorn, was to take charge of all the horses, and proceed on a trapping campaign. There were, moreover, two chance companions in the rival camp. One was Captain Stewart, of

the British army, a gentleman of noble connexions, who was amusing himself by a wandering tour in the far west; in the course of which, he had lived in hunter's style: accompanying various bands of traders, trappers, and Indians; and manifesting that relish for the wilderness, that belongs to men of game spirit.

The other casual inmate of Mr. Campbell's camp was Captain Wyeth; the selfsame leader of the band of New-England salmon-fishers, with whom we parted company in the valley of Pierre's Hole, after the battle with the Blackfeet. A few days after that affair, he again set out from the rendezvous in company with Milton Sublette and his brigade of trappers. On his march, he visited the battle-ground, and penetrated to the deserted fort of the Blackfeet in the midst of the wood. It was a dismal scene. The fort was strewed with the mould-

ering bodies of the slain; while vultures soared aloft, or sat brooding on the trees around; and Indian dogs howled about the place, as if bewailing the death of their masters.

Captain Wyeth travelled for a considerable distance to the south-west, in company with Milton Sublette, when they separated; and the former, with eleven men, the remnant of his band, pushed on for Snake river; kept down the course of that eventful stream; traversed the Blue mountains, trapping beaver occasionally by the way, and finally, after hardships of all kinds, arrived on the 29th of October, at Vancouver, on the Columbia, the main factory of the Hudson's Bay Company.

He experienced hospitable treatment at the hands of the agents of that company; but his men, heartily tired of wandering in the wilderness, or tempted by other prospects, refused, for the mostpart, to continue any longer in his

service. Some set off for the Sandwich islands; some entered into other employ. The captain found, too, that a great part of the goods he had brought with him were unfitted for the Indian trade: in a word, his expedition, undertaken entirely on his own resources, proved a failure. He lost every thing invested in it, but his hopes: these were as strong as ever. He took note of every thing, therefore, that could be of service to him in the further prosecution of his project; collected all the information within his reach, and then set off, accompanied by merely two men, on his return journey across the continent. He had got thus far "by hook and by crook," a mode in which a New England man can make his way all over the world, and through all kinds of difficulties, and was now bound for Boston, in full confidence of being able to form a company for the salmon fishery and fur trade of the Columbia.

The party of Mr. Campbell had met with a disaster in the course of their route from the Sweet Water. Three or four of the men who were reconnoitring the country in the advance of the main body, were visited one night in their camp, by fifteen or twenty Shoshonies. Considering this tribe as perfectly friendly, they received them in the most cordial and confiding manner. In the course of the night, the man on guard near the horses fell sound asleep. Upon which a Shoshonie shot him in the head, and nearly killed him. The savages then made off with the horses, leaving the rest of the party to find their way to the main body on foot.

The rival companies of Captain Bonneville and Mr. Campbell, thus fortuitously brought together, now prosecuted their journey in great good fellowship; forming a joint camp of about a hundred men. The captain, however, began

to entertain doubts that Fitzpatrick and his trappers, who kept profound silence as to their future movements, intended to hunt the same grounds which he had selected for his autumnal campaign; which lay to the west of the Horn river, on its tributary streams. In the course of his march, therefore, he secretly detached a small party of trappers, to make their way to those hunting grounds, while he continued on with the main body; appointing a rendezvous at the next full moon, about the 28th of August, at a place called the Medicine lodge.

On reaching the second chain, called the Big-horn mountains, where the river forced its impetuous way through a precipitous defile, with cascades and rapids, the travellers were obliged to leave its banks, and traverse the mountains by a rugged and frightful route, emphatically called the "Bad Pass."

Descending the opposite side, they again

made for the river banks; and about the middle of August, reached the point below the rapids, where the river becomes navigable for boats. Here Captain Bonneville detached a second party of trappers, consisting of ten men, to seek and join those whom he had detached while on the route; appointing for them the same rendezvous (at the Medicine lodge), on the 28th of August.

All hands now set to work to construct "bull boats," as they are technically called; a light, fragile kind of bark, characteristic of the expedients and inventions of the wilderness; being formed of Buffalo skins, stretched on frames. They are sometimes, also, called skin boats. Captain Wyeth was the first ready; and with his usual promptness and hardihood, launched his frail bark, singly, on this wild and hazardous voyage, down an almost interminable succession of rivers, winding through countries teeming

with savage hordes. Milton Sublette, his former fellow-traveller, and his companion in the battle-scenes of Pierre's Hole, took passage in his boat. His crew consisted of two white men, and two Indians.

We shall hear further of the adventurous captain, and his wild voyage, in the course of our wanderings about the far west.

The remaining parties soon completed their several armaments. That of Captain Bonneville was composed of three bull boats, in which he embarked all his peltries, giving them in charge of Mr. Cerré, with a party of thirty-six men. Mr. Campbell took command of his own boats, and the little squadrons were soon gliding down the bright current of the Bighorn.

The secret precautions which Captain Bonneville had taken, to throw his men first into the trapping ground west of the Bighorn, were, probably, superfluous. It did not appear that

Fitzpatrick had intended to hunt in that direction. The moment Mr. Campbell and his men embarked with the peltries, Fitzpatrick took charge of all the horses, amounting to above a hundred, and struck off to the east, to trap upon Littlehorn, Powder, and Tongue rivers. He was accompanied by Captain Stewart, who was desirous of having a range about the Crow country. Of the adventures they met with in that region of vagabonds and horse-stealers, we shall have something to relate hereafter.

Captain Bonneville being now left to prosecute his trapping campaign without rivalry, set out, on the 17th of August, for the rendezvous at Medicine lodge. He had but four men remaining with him, and forty-six horses to take care of: with these he had to make his way over mountain and plain, through a marauding, horse-stealing region, full of peril for a numerous cavalcade so slightly manned. He

addressed himself to his difficult journey, however, with his usual alacrity of spirit.

In the afternoon of his first day's journey, on drawing near to the Bighorn mountain, on the summit of which he intended to encamp for the night, he observed, to his disquiet, a cloud of smoke rising from its base. He came to a halt, and watched anxiously. It was very irregular; sometimes it would almost die away, and then would mount up in heavy volumes. There was, apparently, a large party encamped there; probably some ruffian horde of Blackfeet. At any rate, it would not do for so small a number of men, with so numerous a cavalcade, to venture within sight of any wandering tribe. Captain Bonneville and his companions, therefore, avoided this dangerous neighbourhood; and, proceeding with extreme caution, reached the summit of the mountain, apparently without being discovered.

Here they found a deserted Blackfoot fort, in which they ensconced themselves, disposed of every thing as securely as possible, and passed the night without molestation. Early the next morning, they descended the south side of the mountain into the great plain extending between it and the Littlehorn range. Here they soon came upon numerous footprints, and the carcasses of buffaloes; by which they knew there must be Indians not far off.

Captain Bonneville now began to feel solicitude about the two small parties of trappers which he had detached; lest the Indians should have come upon them before they had united their forces. But he felt still more solicitude about his own party; for it was hardly to be expected he could traverse these naked plains undiscovered, when Indians were abroad; and should he be discovered, his chance would be a desperate one.

Every thing now depended upon the greatest circumspection. It was dangerous to discharge a gun, or light a fire, or make the least noise, where such quick-eared and quick-sighted enemies were at hand. In the course of the day, they saw indubitable signs that the buffalo had been roaming there in great numbers, and had recently been frightened away. That night they encamped with the greatest care; and threw up a strong breastwork for their protection.

For the two succeeding days, they pressed forward rapidly, but cautiously, across the great plain; fording the tributary streams of the Horn river: encamping one night among thickets; the next, on an island; meeting, repeatedly, with traces of Indians; and now and then, in passing through a defile, experiencing alarms that induced them to cock their rifles.

On the last day of their march, hunger got

the better of their caution, and they shot a fine buffalo bull, at the risk of being betrayed by the report. They did not halt to make a meal, but carried the meat on with them to the place of rendezvous, the Medicine lodge, where they arrived safely, in the evening, and celebrated their arrival by a hearty supper.

The next morning, they erected a strong pen for the horses, and a fortress of logs for themselves; and continued to observe the greatest caution. Their cooking was all done at midday, when the fire makes no glare, and a moderate smoke cannot be perceived at any great distance. In the morning and the evening, when the wind is lulled, the smoke rises perpendicularly in a blue column, or floats in light clouds above the tree-tops, and can be discovered from afar.

In this way, the little party remained for several days, cautiously encamped, until, on

the 29th of August, the two detachments they had been expecting arrived together at the rendezvous. They, as usual, had their several tales of adventures to relate to the captain, which we will furnish to the reader in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

ADVENTURES OF THE PARTY OF TEN—THE BALAAMITE MULE—A DEAD POINT—THE MYSTERIOUS ELKS—A NIGHT ATTACK—A RETREAT—TRAVELLING UNDER AN ALARM—A JOYFUL MEETING—ADVENTURES OF THE OTHER PARTY—A DECOY ELK—A RETREAT TO AN ISLAND—A SAVAGE DANCE OF TRIUMPH—ARRIVAL AT WIND RIVER.

The adventures of the detachment of ten are the first in order. These trappers, when they separated from Captain Bonneville at the place where the furs were embarked, proceeded to the foot of the Bighorn mountain, and having encamped, one of them mounted his mule and

went out to set his trap in a neighbouring stream.

He had not proceeded far when his steed came to a full stop. The trapper kicked and cudgelled, but to every blow and kick, the mule snorted and kicked up, but refused to budge an inch. The rider now cast his eyes warily around in search of some cause for this demur, when, to his dismay, he discovered an Indian fort, within gunshot distance, lowering through the twilight. In a twinkling, he wheeled about; his mule now seemed as eager to get on as himself, and in a few moments brought him, clattering with his traps, among his comrades. He was jeered at for his alacrity in retreating; his report was treated as a false alarm; his brother trappers contented themselves with reconnoitring the fort at a distance, and pronounced that it was deserted.

As night set in, the usual precaution, en-

joined by Captain Bonneville on his men, was observed. The horses were brought in and tied, and a guard stationed over them. This done, the men wrapped themselves in their blankets, stretched themselves before the fire, and being fatigued with a long day's march, and gorged with a hearty supper, were soon in a profound sleep.

The camp fires gradually died away; all was dark and silent; the sentinel stationed to watch the horses had marched as far, and supped as heartily as any of his companions, and while they snored he began to nod at his post. After a time, a low trampling noise reached his ear. He half opened his closing eyes, and beheld two or three elks moving about among the lodges, picking, and smelling, and grazing here and there. The sight of elk within the purlieus of the camp caused some little surprise; but having had his supper, he cared not for elk

meat, and, suffering them to graze about unmolested, soon relapsed into a doze.

Suddenly, before daybreak, a discharge of fire-arms, and a struggle and tramp of horses, made every one start to his feet. The first move was to secure the horses. Some were gone; others were struggling, and kicking, and trembling, for there was a horrible uproar of whoops, and yells, and fire-arms. Several trappers stole quietly from the camp, and succeeded in driving in the horses which had broken away; the rest were tethered still more strongly. A breastwork was thrown up of saddles, baggage, and camp furniture, and all hands waited anxiously for daylight.

The Indians, in the mean time, collected on a neighbouring height, kept up the most horrible clamour, in hopes of striking a panic into the camp, or frightening off the horses.

When the day dawned, the trappers attacked

them briskly, and drove them to some distance. A desultory firing was kept up for an hour, when the Indians, seeing nothing was to be gained, gave up the contest and retired. They proved to be a war party of Blackfeet, who, while in search of the Crow tribe, had fallen upon the trail of Captain Bonneville on the Popo Agie, and dogged him to the Bighorn; but had been completely baffled by his vigilance. They had then waylaid the present detachment, and were actually housed in perfect silence within their fort, when the mule of the trapper made such a dead point.

The savages went off uttering the wildest denunciations of hostility, mingled with opprobrious terms in broken English, and gesticulations of the most insulting kind.

In this mêlée, one white man was wounded, and two horses were killed. On preparing the morning's meal, however, a number of cups,

knives, and other articles were missing, which had doubtless been carried off by the fictitious elk, during the slumber of the very sagacious sentinel.

As the Indians had gone off in the direction which the trappers had intended to travel, the latter changed their route, and pushed forward rapidly through the "Bad Pass," nor halted until night; when supposing themselves out of the reach of the enemy, they contented themselves with tying up their horses and posting a guard.

They had scarce laid down to sleep, when a dog strayed into the camp with a small pack of moccasins tied upon his back; for dogs are made to carry burdens among the Indians. The sentinel, more knowing than he of the preceding night, awoke his companions and reported the circumstance. It was evident that Indians were at hand. All were instantly at

work; a strong pen was soon constructed for the horses, after completing which, they resumed their slumbers with the composure of men long inured to dangers.

In the next night, the prowling of dogs about the camp, and various suspicious noises, showed that Indians were still hovering about them. Hurrying on by long marches, they at length fell upon a trail, which, with the experienced eye of veteran woodmen, they soon discovered to be that of the party of trappers detached by Captain Bonneville when on his march, and which they were sent to join. They likewise ascertained from various signs, that this party had suffered some maltreatment from the Indians.

They now pursued the trail with the most intense anxiety; it carried them to the banks of the stream called the Gray Bull, and down along its course, until they came to where it

empties into the Horn river. Here, to their great joy, they discovered the comrades of whom they were in search, all strongly fortified, and in a state of great watchfulness and anxiety.

We now take up the adventures of this first detachment of trappers. These men, after parting with the main body under Captain Bonneville, had proceeded slowly for several days up the course of the river, trapping beaver as they went. One morning, as they were about to visit their traps, one of the camp-keepers pointed to a fine elk, grazing at a distance, and requested them to shoot it. Three of the trappers started off for the purpose. In passing a thicket they were fired upon by some savages in ambush, and at the same time, the pretended elk, throwing off his hide and his horns, started forth an Indian warrior.

One of the three trappers had been brought

down by the volley; the others fled to the camp, and all hands, seizing up whatever they could carry off, retreated to a small island in the river, and took refuge among the willows. Here they were soon joined by their comrade who had fallen, but who had merely been wounded in the neck.

In the mean time, the Indians took possession of the deserted camp, with all the traps, accoutrements, and horses. While they were busy among the spoils, a solitary trapper, who had been absent at his work, came sauntering to the camp with his traps on his back. He had approached near by, when an Indian came forward and motioned him to keep away; at the same moment, he was perceived by his comrades on the island, and warned of his danger with loud cries. The poor fellow stood for a moment, bewildered and aghast, then dropping his traps, wheeled and made off at full

speed quickened by a sportive volley which the Indians rattled after him.

In high good-humour with their easy triumph, the savages now formed a circle round the fire and performed a war dance, with the unlucky trappers for rueful spectators.* This done,

* The following description of an Indian war dance, is derived from " Keating's Narrative."—*English Editor.*

" Having requested that the warriors should favor us with a dance, Wanotan had one performed for us in the afternoon ; he apologized for the imperfection of the dancers, the best being then absent from the place. The dresses which they wore were more carefully arranged than usual, and indicated that some pains had been taken for the occasion. Among the fantastic ornaments which they had assumed, a paper of pins opened and hanging from the head-dress of one of the warriors was conspicuous. In his hand he held a wand about ten feet long, to which was attached a piece of red cloth of the same length, and about six inches wide ; one of the edges of this band was fastened to the staff, the other was furnished with black and white feathers, closely secured to it by their quills, and forming a sort of fringe. This was one of the two

imboldened by what they considered cowardice on the part of the white men, they neglected

insignia or wands of the Association of the Nanpashene : but the most singular dress was that of Wanotan's son. The dresses were evidently made for his father, and too large for him, so that they gave to his figure a stiff and clumsy appearance, which strongly reminded us of the awkward gait of those children who, among civilized nations, are allowed at too early an age to assume the dress of riper years, by which they lose their infantine grace and ease. This is one of the many features in which we delight in tracing an analogy between the propensities of man in his natural state, and in his more refined condition. This lad wore a very large head-dress, consisting of feathers made of the war-eagle, and which in form was precisely similar to that of the King of the Friendly Islands, as represented in Cook's Voyages. His dress was made of many ermine-skins, variously disposed upon a white leather cloak. The performers stood in a ring, each with the wing of a bird in his hand, with which he beat time on his gun, arrow, or something that would emit a sound. They commenced their singing in a low tone, gradually raising it for a few minutes, then closing it suddenly with a shrill yell ; after a slight interruption, they recommenced the same low and melancholy air,

their usual mode of bush fighting, and advanced openly within twenty paces of the willows. A sharp volley from the trappers brought them to a sudden halt, and laid three of them breathless. The chief, who had stationed himself on an eminence to direct all the movements of his people, seeing three of his warriors laid low,

which they sang without any variation for near three quarters of an hour. This was accompanied by a few unmeaning words. Occasionally one of the performers would advance into the centre of the ring, and relate his warlike adventures. Among those who did this was a slender and active warrior, not tall, but distinguished by his very thin lips and nose. Among the many feats which this warrior enumerated, he took care to omit his murders of white men. The dance which had accompanied this had nothing particular; they frequently laughed aloud, and appeared to go through the exercise with much spirit. After the dance had continued for some time, a few presents were divided among them: upon receiving them they hastily ran away, apparently as much satisfied as we were."

ordered the rest to retire. They immediately did so, and the whole band soon disappeared behind a point of woods, carrying off with them the horses, traps, and the greater part of the baggage.

It was just after this misfortune, that the party of ten men discovered this forlorn band of trappers in a fortress, which they had thrown up after their disaster. They were so perfectly dismayed, that they could not be induced even to go in quest of their traps, which they had set in a neighbouring stream. The two parties now joined their forces, and made their way, without further misfortune, to the rendezvous.

Captain Bonneville perceived from the reports of these parties, as well as from what he had observed himself in his recent march, that he was in a neighbourhood teeming with danger.

Two wandering Snake Indians, also, who visited the camp, assured him that there were two large bands of Crows marching rapidly upon him.

He broke up his encampment, therefore, on the 1st of September, made his way to the south, across the Littlehorn mountain, until he reached Wind river, and then turning westward, moved slowly up the banks of that stream, giving time for his men to trap as he proceeded. As it was not in the plan of the present hunting campaign to go near the caches on Green river, and as the trappers were in want of traps to replace those they had lost, Captain Bonneville undertook to visit the caches, and procure a supply. To accompany him in this hazardous expedition, which would take him through the defiles of the Wind river mountains, and up the Green river valley, he took but three men; the main party were to continue on

trapping up towards the head of Wind river, near which he was to rejoin them, just about the place where that stream issues from the mountains. We shall accompany the captain on his adventurous errand.

CHAPTER VIII.

CAPTAIN BONNEVILLE SETS OUT FOR GREEN RIVER VALLEY—JOURNEY UP THE POPO AGIE—BUFFALOES—THE STARING WHITE BEARS—THE SMOKE—THE WARM SPRINGS—ATTEMPT TO TRAVERSE THE WIND RIVER MOUNTAINS—THE GREAT SLOPE—MOUNTAIN DELLS AND CHASMS—CRYSTAL LAKES—ASCENT OF A SNOWY PEAK—SUBLIME PROSPECT—A PANORAMA—"LES DIGNES DE PITIE," OR WILD MEN OF THE MOUNTAINS.

HAVING forded Wind river a little above its mouth, Captain Bonneville and his three companions proceeded across a gravelly plain, until they fell upon the Popo Agie, up the left bank of which they held their course, nearly in a southerly direction. Here they came upon numerous droves of buffalo, and halted for the purpose of procuring a supply of beef.

As the hunters were stealing cautiously to get within shot of the game, two small white bears suddenly presented themselves in their path, and, rising upon their hind legs, contemplated them for some time, with a whimsically solemn gaze. The hunters remained motionless; whereupon the bears, having apparently satisfied their curiosity, lowered themselves upon all fours, and began to withdraw.

The hunters now advanced, upon which the bears turned, rose again upon their haunches, and repeated their serio-comic examination. This was repeated several times, until the hunters, piqued at their unmannerly staring, rebuked it with a discharge of their rifles. The bears made an awkward bound or two, as if wounded, and then walked off with great gravity, seeming to commune together, and every now and then turning to take another look at the hunters. It was well for the latter that the

bears were but half grown, and had not yet acquired the ferocity of their kind.

The buffalo were somewhat startled at the report of fire-arms; but the hunters succeeded in killing a couple of fine cows, and, having secured the best of the meat, continued forward until some time after dark, when, encamping in a large thicket of willows, they made a great fire, roasted buffalo beef enough for half a score, disposed of the whole of it with keen relish and high glee, and then "turned in" for the night and slept soundly, like weary and well-fed hunters.

At daylight they were in the saddle again, and skirted along the river, passing through fresh grassy meadows, and a succession of beautiful groves of willows and cotton-wood. Towards evening, Captain Bonneville observed a smoke at a distance rising from among hills, directly in the route he was pursuing. Apprehensive

of some hostile band, he concealed the horses in a thicket, and, accompanied by one of his men, crawled cautiously up a height, from which he could overlook the scene of danger. Here, with a spyglass, he reconnoitred the surrounding country, but not a lodge or fire, not a man, horse, or dog, was to be discovered: in short, the smoke which had caused such alarm proved to be the vapour from several warm, or rather hot springs of considerable magnitude, pouring forth streams in every direction over a bottom of white clay. One of the springs was about twenty-five yards in diameter, and so deep, that the water was of a bright green colour.

They were now advancing diagonally upon the chain of Wind river mountains, which lay between them and Green river valley. To coast round their southern points would be a wide circuit; whereas, could they force a way through them, they might proceed in a straight

line. The mountains were lofty, with snowy peaks and cragged sides; it was hoped, however, that some practicable defile might be found. They attempted, accordingly, to penetrate the mountains by following up one of the branches of the Popo Agie, but soon found themselves in the midst of stupendous crags and pricipices, that barred all progress.

Retracing their steps, and falling back upon the river, they consulted where to make another attempt. They were too close beneath the mountains to scan them generally, but they now recollected having noticed, from the plain, a beautiful slope, rising at an angle of about thirty degrees, and apparently without any break, until it reached the snowy region. Seeking this gentle acclivity, they began to ascend it with alacrity, trusting to find at the top one of those elevated plains which prevail among the Rocky mountains. The slope was

covered with coarse gravel, interspersed with plates of freestone.

They attained the summit with some toil, but found, instead of a level, or rather undulating plain, that they were on the brink of a deep and precipitous ravine, from the bottom of which, rose a second slope, similar to the one they had just ascended. Down into this profound ravine they made their way by a rugged path, or rather fissure of the rocks, and then laboured up the second slope. They gained the summit only to find themselves on another ravine, and now perceived that this vast mountain which had presented such a sloping and even side to the distant beholder on the plain, was shagged by frightful precipices, and seamed with longitudinal chasms, deep and dangerous.

In one of these wild dells they passed the night, and slept soundly and sweetly after their

fatigues. Two days more of arduous climbing and scrambling only served to admit them into the heart of this mountainous and awful solitude; where difficulties increased as they proceeded. Sometimes they scrambled from rock to rock, up the bed of some mountain stream, dashing its bright way down to the plains; sometimes they availed themselves of the paths made by the deer and the mountain sheep, which, however, often took them to the brink of fearful precipices, or led to rugged defiles, impassable for their horses. At one place, they were obliged to slide their horses down the face of a rock, in which attempt some of the poor animals lost their footing, rolled to the bottom, and came near being dashed to pieces.

In the afternoon of the second day, the travellers attained one of the elevated valleys locked up in this singular bed of mountains. Here were two bright and beautiful little lakes,

set like mirrors in the midst of stern and rocky heights, and surrounded by grassy meadows, inexpressibly refreshing to the eye. These probably were among the sources of those mighty streams that take their rise among these mountains, and wander hundreds of miles through the plains.

In the green pastures bordering upon these lakes, the travellers halted to repose, and to give their weary horses time to crop the sweet and tender herbage. They had now ascended to a great height above the level of the plains, yet they beheld huge crags of granite piled one upon another, and beetling like battlements far above them.

While two of the men remained in the camp with the horses, Captain Bonneville, accompanied by the other men, set out to climb a neighbouring height, hoping to gain a commanding prospect, and discern some practicable

route through this stupendous labyrinth. After much toil, he reached the summit of a lofty cliff, but it was only to behold gigantic peaks rising all around, and towering far into the snowy regions of the atmosphere.

Selecting one which appeared to be the highest, he crossed a narrow intervening valley, and began to scale it. He soon found that he had undertaken a tremendous task; but the pride of man is never more obstinate than when climbing mountains. The ascent was so steep and rugged that he and his companions were frequently obliged to clamber on hands and knees, with their guns slung upon their backs. Frequently exhausted with fatigue, and dripping with perspiration, they threw themselves upon the snow, and took handfuls of it to allay their parching thirst. At one place, they even stripped off their coats and hung them upon the bushes, and thus lightly clad, pro-

ceeded to scramble over these eternal snows. As they ascended still higher, there were cool breezes that refreshed and braced them, and springing with new ardour to their task, they at length attained the summit.

Here a scene burst upon the view of Captain Bonneville, that for a time astonished and overwhelmed him with its immensity. He stood, in fact, upon that dividing ridge which Indians regard as the crest of the world; and on each side of which, the landscape may be said to decline to the two cardinal oceans of the globe.

Whichever way he turned his eye, it was confounded by the vastness and variety of objects. Beneath him, the Rocky mountains seemed to open all their secret recesses: deep solemn valleys; treasured lakes; dreary passes; rugged defiles, and foaming torrents; while beyond their savage precincts, the eye was lost in an almost immeasurable landscape, stretch-

ing on every side into dim and hazy distance like the expanse of a summer's sea. Whichever way he looked, he beheld vast plains glimmering with reflected sunshine; mighty streams wandering on their shining course toward either ocean, and snowy mountains, chain beyond chain, and peak beyond peak, till they melted like clouds into the horizon.

For a time, the Indian fable seemed realized: he had attained that height from which the Blackfoot warrior, after death, first catches a view of the land of souls, and beholds the happy hunting grounds spread out below him, brightening with the abodes of the free and generous spirits.

The captain stood for a long while gazing upon this scene, lost in a crowd of vague and indefinite ideas and sensations. A long-drawn inspiration at length relieved him from this inthralment of the mind, and he began to

analyze the parts of this vast panorama. A simple enumeration of a few of its features, may give some idea of its collective grandeur and magnificence.

The peak on which the captain had taken his stand, commanded the whole Wind river chain; which, in fact, may rather be considered one immense mountain, broken into snowy peaks and lateral spurs, and seamed with narrow valleys. Some of these valleys glittered with silver lakes and gushing streams; the fountain heads, as it were, of the mighty tributaries to the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans.

Beyond the snowy peaks, to the south, and far, far below the mountain range, the gentle river, called the Sweet Water, was seen pursuing its tranquil way through the rugged region of the Black hills. In the east, the head waters of Wind river wandered through a plain, until, mingling in one powerful current, they

forced their way through the range of Horn mountains, and were lost to view. To the north, were caught glimpses of the upper streams of the Yellowstone, that great tributary of the Missouri.

In another direction were to be seen some of the sources of the Oregon or Columbia, flowing to the north-west, past those towering landmarks the Three Tetons, and pouring down into the great lava plain. While almost at the captain's feet, the Green river, or Colorado of the west, set forth on its far wandering pilgrimage to the Gulf of California; at first a mere mountain torrent, dashing northward over crag and precipice, in a succession of cascades, and tumbling into the plain, where, expanding into an ample river, it circled away to the south, and after alternately shining out and disappearing in the mazes of the vast landscape, was finally lost in a horizon of moun-

tains. The day was calm and cloudless, and the atmosphere so pure that objects were discernible at an astonishing distance. The whole of this immense area was enclosed by an outer range of shadowy peaks, some of them faintly marked on the horizon, which seemed to wall it in from the rest of the earth.

It is to be regretted that Captain Bonneville had no instruments with him with which to ascertain the altitude of this peak. He gives it as his opinion, that this is the loftiest point of the North American continent; but of this we have no satisfactory proof. It is certain that the Rocky mountains are of an altitude vastly superior to what was formerly supposed. We rather incline to the opinion that the highest peak is further to the northward, and is the same measured by Mr. Thompson, surveyor to the North-west Company; who, by the joint means of the barometer and trigonometric

measurement, ascertained it to be twenty-five thousand feet above the level of the sea; an elevation only inferior to that of the Himalayas.*

For a long time Captain Bonneville remained gazing around him with wonder and enthusiasm; at length the chill and wintry winds, whirling about the snow-clad height, admonished him to descend. He soon regained the spot where he and his companions had thrown off their coats, which were now gladly resumed, and, retracing their course down the peak, they safely rejoined their companions on the border of the lake.

Notwithstanding the savage, and almost inaccessible nature of these mountains, they have their inhabitants. As one of the party was out

* See the letter of Professor Renwick, in the Appendix to Astoria.

hunting, he came upon the solitary track of a man, in a lonely valley. Following it up, he reached the brow of a cliff, from whence he beheld three savages running across the valley below him. He fired his gun to call their attention, hoping to induce them to turn back. they only fled the faster, and disappeared among the rocks.

The hunter returned and reported what he had seen. Captain Bonneville at once concluded that these belonged to a kind of hermit race, scanty in number, that inhabit the highest and most inaccessible fastnesses. They speak the Shoshonie language, and probably are offsets from that tribe, though they have peculiarities of their own, which distinguish them from all other Indians. They are miserably poor; own no horses, and are destitute of every convenience to be derived from an intercourse with the whites. Their weapons are bows and

stone-pointed arrows, with which they hunt the deer, the elk, and the mountain sheep. They are to be found scattered about the countries of the Shoshonie, Flathead, Crow, and Black-feet tribes; but their residences are always in lonely places, and the clefts of the rocks.

Their footsteps are often seen by the trappers in the high and solitary valleys among the mountains, and the smokes of their fires descried among the precipices, but they themselves are rarely met with, and still more rarely brought to a parley, so great is their shyness, and their dread of strangers.

As their poverty offers no temptation to the marauder, and as they are inoffensive in their habits, they are never the objects of warfare: should one of them, however, fall into the hands of a war party, he is sure to be made a sacrifice, for the sake of that savage trophy, a scalp, and that barbarous ceremony, a scalp

dance. These forlorn beings, forming a mere link between human nature and the brute, have been looked down upon with pity and contempt by the creole trappers, who have given them the appellation of "les dignes de pitie," or "the objects of pity." They appear more worthy to be called, the wild men of the mountains.

CHAPTER IX.

A RETROGRADE MOVE—CHANNEL OF A MOUNTAIN TORRENT—ALPINE SCENERY—CASCADES—BEAVER VALLEYS—BEAVERS AT WORK—THEIR ARCHITECTURE—THEIR MODES OF FELLING TREES—MODE OF TRAPPING BEAVER—CONTESTS OF SKILL—A BEAVER "UP TO TRAP"—ARRIVAL AT THE GREEN RIVER CACHERS.

THE view from the snowy peak of the Wind river mountain, while it had excited Captain Bonneville's enthusiasm, had satisfied him that it would be useless to force a passage westward, through multiplying barriers of cliffs and precipices. Turning his face eastward, therefore, he endeavoured to regain the plains, intending to make the circuit round the southern

point of the mountain. To descend, and to extricate himself from the heart of this rock-piled wilderness, was almost as difficult as to penetrate it.

Taking his course down the ravine of a tumbling stream, the commencement of some future river, he descended from rock to rock, and shelf to shelf, between stupendous cliffs and beetling crags, that sprang up to the sky. Often he had to cross and recross the rushing torrent, as it wound foaming and roaring down its broken channel, or was walled by perpendicular precipices; and imminent was the hazard of breaking the legs of the horses in the clefts and fissures of slippery rocks.

The whole scenery of this deep ravine was of Alpine wildness and sublimity. Sometimes the travellers passed beneath cascades which pitched from such lofty heights, that the water fell into the stream like heavy rain. In other

places, torrents came tumbling from crag to crag, dashing into foam and spray, and making tremendous din and uproar.

On the second day of their descent, the travellers having got beyond the steepest pitch of the mountains, came to where the deep and rugged ravine began occasionally to expand into small levels or valleys, and the stream to assume for short intervals a more peaceful character. Here, not merely the river itself, but every rivulet flowing into it, was dammed up by communities of industrious beavers, so as to inundate the neighbourhood, and make continual swamps.

During a mid-day halt in one of these beaver valleys, Captain Bonneville left his companions, and strolled down the course of the stream to reconnoitre. He had not proceeded far, when he came to a beaver pond, and caught a glimpse of one of its painstaking inhabitants busily at

work upon the dam. The curiosity of the captain was aroused, to behold the mode of operating of this far-famed architect; he moved forward, therefore, with the utmost caution, parting the branches of the water willows without making any noise, until having attained a position commanding a view of the whole pond, he stretched himself flat on the ground, and watched the solitary workman.

In a little while, three others appeared at the head of the dam, bringing sticks and bushes. With these they proceeded directly to the barrier, which Captain Bonneville perceived was in need of repair. Having deposited their loads upon the broken part, they dived into the water, and shortly reappeared at the surface. Each now brought a quantity of mud, with which he would plaster the sticks and bushes just deposited. This kind of masonry was continued for some time, repeated supplies

of wood and mud being brought, and treated in the same manner. This done, the industrious beavers indulged in a little recreation, chasing each other about the pond, dodging and whisking about on the surface, or diving to the bottom; and in their frolic, often slapping their tails on the water with a loud clacking sound.

While they were thus amusing themselves, another of the fraternity made his appearance, and looked gravely on their sports for some time, without offering to join in them. He then climbed the bank close to where the captain was concealed, and, rearing himself on his hind quarters, in a sitting position, put his fore paws against a young pine-tree, and began to cut the bark with his teeth. At times he would tear off a small piece, and holding it between his paws, and retaining his sedentary

position, would feed himself with it, after the fashion of a monkey.

The object of the beaver, however, was evidently to cut down the tree; and he was proceeding with his work, when he was alarmed by the approach of Captain Bonneville's men, who, feeling anxious at the protracted absence of their leader, were coming in search of him. At the sound of their voices, all the beavers, busy as well as idle, dived at once beneath the surface, and were no more to be seen.

Captain Bonneville regretted this interruption. He had heard much of the sagacity of the beaver in cutting down trees, in which it is said, they manage to make them fall into the water, and in such a position and direction as may be most favourable for conveyance to the desired point. In the present instance, the tree was a tall straight pine, and as it grew

perpendicularly, and there was not a breath of air stirring, the beaver could have felled it in any direction he pleased, if really capable of exercising a discretion in the matter. He was evidently engaged in "belting" the tree, and his first incision had been on the side nearest to the water.

Captain Bonneville, however, discredits on the whole, the alleged sagacity of the beaver in this particular, and thinks the animal has no other aim than to get the tree down, without any of the subtle calculation as to its mode or direction of falling. This attribute, he thinks, has been ascribed to them from the circumstance, that most trees growing near water courses, either lean bodily towards the stream, or stretch their largest limbs in that direction, to benefit by the space, the light, and the air to be found there. The beaver, of course, attacks those trees which are nearest at

hand, and on the banks of the stream or pond. He makes incisions round them, or, in technical phrase, belts them with his teeth, and when they fall, they naturally take the direction in which their trunks or branches preponderate.

"I have often," says Captain Bonneville, "seen trees measuring eighteen inches in diameter, at the places where they had been cut through by the beaver, but they lay in all directions, and often very inconveniently for the after purposes of the animal. In fact, so little ingenuity do they at times display in this particular, that at one of our camps on Snake river, a beaver was found with his head wedged into the cut which he had made, the tree having fallen upon him and held him prisoner until he died."

Great choice, according to the captain, is certainly displayed by the beaver in selecting the wood which is to furnish bark for winter

provision. The whole beaver household, old and young, set out upon this business, and will often make long journeys before they are suited. Sometimes they cut down trees of the largest size, and then cull the branches, the bark of which is most to their taste. These they cut into lengths of about three feet, convey them to the water, and float them to their lodges, where they are stored away for winter.

They are studious of cleanliness and comfort in their lodges, and after their repasts, will carry out the sticks from which they have eaten the bark, and throw them into the current beyond the barrier. They are jealous, too, of their territories, and extremely pugnacious, never permitting a strange beaver to enter their premises, and often fight with such virulence as almost to tear each other to pieces. In the spring, which is the breeding season, the male leaves the female at home,

and sets off on a tour of pleasure, rambling often to a great distance, recreating himself in every clear and quiet expanse of water on his way, and climbing the banks occasionally to feast upon the tender sprouts of the young willows. As summer advances, he gives up his bachelor rambles, and bethinking himself of housekeeping duties, returns home to his mate and his new progeny, and marshals them all for the foraging expedition in quest of winter provisions.

After having shown the public spirit of this praiseworthy little animal as a member of a community, and his amiable and exemplary conduct as the father of a family, we grieve to record the perils with which he is environed, and the snares set for him and his painstaking household.

"Practice," says Captain Bonneville, "has given such a quickness of eye to the ex-

perienced trapper in all that relates to his pursuit, that he can detect the slightest sign of a beaver, however wild; and although the lodge may be concealed by close thickets and overhanging willows, he can generally at a single glance, make an accurate guess at the number of its inmates. He now goes to work to set his trap; planting it upon the shore, in some chosen place, two or three inches below the surface of the water, and secures it by a chain to a pole set deep in the mud. A small twig is then stripped of its bark, and one end is dipped in the "medicine," as the trappers term the peculiar bait which they employ. This end of the stick rises about four inches above the surface of the water, the other end is planted between the jaws of the trap. The beaver, possessing an acute sense of smell, is soon attracted by the odour of the bait. As he raises his nose towards it, his foot is caught

in the trap. In his fright he throws a somerset into the deep water. The trap, being fastened to the pole, resists all his efforts to drag it to the shore; the chain by which it is fastened defies his teeth; he struggles for a time, and at length sinks to the bottom and is drowned.

Upon rocky bottoms, where it is not possible to plant the pole, it is thrown into the stream. The beaver, when entrapped, often gets fastened by the chain to sunken logs or floating timber; if he gets to shore, he is entangled in the thickets of brook willows. In such cases, however, it costs the trapper a diligent search, and sometimes a bout at swimming, before he finds his game.

Occasionally it happens that several members of a beaver family are trapped in succession. The survivors then become extremely shy, and can scarcely be "brought to medicine," to use

the trapper's phrase for "taking the bait." In such case, the trapper gives up the use of the bait, and conceals his traps in the usual paths and crossing places of the household. The beaver now being completely "up to trap," approaches them cautiously, and springs them ingeniously with a stick. At other times, he turns the traps bottom upwards, by the same means, and occasionally even drags them to the barrier and conceals them in the mud. The trapper now gives up the contest of ingenuity, and shouldering his traps, marches off, admitting that he is not yet "up to beaver."

On the day following Captain Bonneville's supervision of the industrious and frolicsome community of beavers, of which he has given so edifying an account, he succeeded in extricating himself from the Wind river mountains, and regaining the plain to the eastward, made a great bend to the south, so as to go

round the bases of the mountains, and arrived without further incident of importance, at the old place of rendezvous in Green river valley, on the 17th of September.

He found the caches, in which he had deposited his superfluous goods and equipments, all safe, and having opened and taken from them the necessary supplies, he closed them again; taking care to obliterate all traces that might betray them to the keen eyes of Indian marauders.

CHAPTER X.

ROUTE TOWARDS WIND RIVER—DANGEROUS NEIGHBOURHOOD—ALARMS AND PRECAUTIONS—A SHAM ENCAMPMENT—APPARITION OF AN INDIAN SPY—MIDNIGHT MOVE—A MOUNTAIN DEFILE—THE WIND RIVER VALLEY—TRACKING A PARTY—DESERTED CAMPS—SYMPTOMS OF CROWS—MEETING OF COMRADES—A TRAPPER ENTRAPPED—CROW PLEASANTRY—CROW SPIES—A DECAMPMENT—RETURN TO GREEN RIVER VALLEY—MEETING WITH FITZPATRICK'S PARTY—THEIR ADVENTURES AMONG THE CROWS—ORTHODOX CROWS.

On the 18th of September, Captain Bonneville and his three companions set out, bright and early, to rejoin the main party, from which they had parted on Wind river. Their route lay up the Green river valley, with that stream on their right hand, and beyond it, the range

of Wind river mountains. At the head of the valley, they were to pass through a defile which would bring them out beyond the northern end of these mountains, to the head of Wind river; where they expected to meet the main party, according to arrangement.

We have already adverted to the dangerous nature of this neighbourhood, infested by roving bands of Crows and Blackfeet; to whom the numerous defiles and passes of the country afford capital places for ambush and surprise. The travellers, therefore, kept a vigilant eye upon every thing that might give intimation of lurking danger.

About two hours after mid-day, as they reached the summit of a hill, they discovered buffalo on the plain below, running in every direction. One of the men, too, fancied he heard the report of a gun. It was concluded,

therefore, that there was some party of Indians below, hunting the buffalo.

The horses were immediately concealed in a narrow ravine; and the captain, mounting an eminence, but concealing himself from view, reconnoitred the whole neighbourhood with a telescope. Not an Indian was to be seen; so after halting about an hour, he resumed his journey. Convinced, however, that he was in a dangerous neighbourhood, he advanced with the utmost caution; winding his way through hollows and ravines, and avoiding, as much as possible, any open tract, or rising ground, that might betray his little party to the watchful eye of any Indian scout.

Arriving, at length, at the edge of the open meadow land bordering on the river, he again observed the buffalo, as far as he could see, scampering in great alarm. Once more con-

cealing the horses, he and his companions remained for a long time, watching the various groups of the animals, as each caught the panic and started off: but they sought in vain to discover the cause.

They were now about to enter the mountain defile, at the head of Green river valley, where they might be waylaid and attacked: they, therefore, arranged the packs on their horses, in the manner most secure and convenient for sudden flight, should such be necessary. This done they again set forward, keeping the most anxious look out in every direction.

It was now drawing towards evening; but they could not think of encamping for the night, in a place so full of danger. Captain Bonneville, therefore, determined to halt about sunset, kindle a fire, as if for encampment, cook and eat supper; but, as soon as it was

sufficiently dark, to make a rapid move for the summit of the mountain, and seek some secluded spot for their night's lodgings.

Accordingly, as the sun went down, the little party came to a halt, made a large fire, spitted their buffalo meat on wooden sticks, and, when sufficiently roasted, planted the savoury viands before them; cutting off huge slices with their hunting knives, and supping with a hunter's appetite. The light of their fire would not fail, as they knew, to attract the attention of any Indian horde in the neighbourhood: but they trusted to be off and away, before any prowlers could reach the place.

While they were supping thus hastily, however, one of their party suddenly started up, and shouted "Indians!" All were instantly on their feet, with their rifles in their hands;

but could see no enemy. The man, however, declared that he had seen an Indian advancing, cautiously, along the trail which they had made in coming to the encampment; who, the moment he was perceived, had thrown himself on the ground, and disappeared. He urged Captain Bonneville instantly to decamp. The captain, however, took the matter more coolly. The single fact, that the Indian had endeavoured to hide himself, convinced him that he was not one of a party, on the advance to make an attack. He was, probably, some scout, who had followed up their trail, until he came in sight of their fire. He would, in such case, return, and report what he had seen to his companions. These, supposing the white men encamped for the night, would keep aloof until very late; when all should be asleep. They would then, according to Indian tactics,

make their stealthy approaches, and place themselves in ambush around, preparatory to their attack, at the usual hour of daylight.

Such was Captain Bonneville's conclusion; in consequence of which, he counselled his men to keep perfectly quiet, and act as if free from all alarm, until the proper time arrived for a move. They, accordingly, continued their repast with pretended appetite and jollity; and then trimmed and replenished their fire, as if for a bivouac.

As soon, however, as the night had completely set in, they left their fire blazing; walked quietly among the willows, and then leaping into their saddles, made off as noiselessly as possible. In proportion as they left the point of danger behind them, they relaxed in their rigid and anxious taciturnity, and began to joke at the expense of their enemy: whom they pictured to themselves, mousing in

the neighbourhood of their deserted fire, waiting for the proper time of attack, and preparing for a grand disappointment.

About midnight, feeling satisfied that they had gained a secure distance, they posted one of their number to keep watch; in case the enemy should follow on their trail: and then, turning abruptly into a dense and matted thicket of willows, halted for the night at the foot of the mountain, instead of making for the summit, as they had originally intended.

A trapper in the wilderness, like a sailor on the ocean, snatches morsels of enjoyment in the midst of trouble, and sleeps soundly when surrounded by danger. The little party now made their arrangements for sleep with perfect calmness: they did not venture to make a fire and cook, it is true; though generally done by hunters whenever they come to a halt, and have provisions. They comforted themselves,

however, by smoking a tranquil pipe; and then calling in the watch, and turning loose the horses, stretched themselves on their pallets, agreed that whoever should first awake, should rouse the rest; and in a little while were all in as sound sleep as though in the midst of a fortress.

A little before day, they were all on the alert; it was the hour for Indian maraud. A sentinel was immediately detached, to post himself at a little distance on their trail, and give the alarm, should he see or hear an enemy.

With the first blink of dawn, the rest sought the horses; brought them to the camp, and tied them up, until an hour after sunrise: when, the sentinel having reported that all was well, they sprang once more into their saddles, and pursued the most covert and secret paths up the mountain, avoiding the direct route.

At noon, they halted and made a hasty repast; and then bent their course so as to regain the route from which they had diverged. They were now made sensible of the danger from which they had just escaped. There were tracks of Indians who had evidently been in pursuit of them; but had recently returned, baffled in their search.

Trusting that they had now got a fair start, and could not be overtaken before night, even in case the Indians should renew the chase, they pushed briskly forward, and did not encamp until late; when they cautiously concealed themselves in a secure nook of the mountains.

Without any further alarm, they made their way to the head waters of Wind river; and reached the neighbourhood in which they had appointed the rendezvous with their companions. It was within the precincts of the

Crow country; the Wind river valley being one of the favourite haunts of that restless tribe.

After much searching, Captain Bonneville, at length, came upon a trail which had evidently been made by his main party. It was so old, however, that he feared his people might have left the neighbourhood; driven off, perhaps, by some of those war parties which were on the prowl. He continued his search with great anxiety, and no little fatigue; for his horses were jaded, and almost crippled, by their forced marches and scramblings through rocky defiles.

On the following day, about noon, Captain Bonneville came upon a deserted camp of his people, from which they had, evidently, turned back; but he could find no signs to indicate why they had done so; whether they had met with misfortune, or molestation, or in what

direction they had gone. He was now, more than ever, perplexed.

On the next day, he resumed his march with increasing anxiety. The feet of his horses had by this time become so worn and wounded by the rocks, that he had to make moccasins for them of buffalo hide. About noon, he came to another deserted camp of his men, but soon after lost their trail. After great search, he once more found it, turning in a southerly direction along the eastern bases of the Wind river mountains, which towered to the right.

He now pushed forward with all possible speed, in hopes of overtaking the party. At night, he slept at another of their camps, from which they had but recently departed. When the day dawned sufficiently to distinguish objects, he perceived the danger that must be dogging the heels of his main party. All about the camp

were traces of Indians, who must have been prowling about it at the time his people had passed the night there; and who must still be hovering about them. Convinced, now, that the main party could not be at any great distance, he mounted a scout on the best horse, and sent him forward to overtake them, to warn them of their danger, and to order them to halt, until he should regain them.

In the afternoon, to his great joy, he met the scout returning, with six comrades from the main party, leading fresh horses for his accommodation; and on the following day (September the 25th), all hands were once more reunited, after a separation of nearly three weeks. Their meeting was hearty and joyous; for they had both experienced dangers and perplexities.

The main party, in pursuing their course up the Wind river valley, had been dogged the whole way by a war party of Crows. In one

place, they had been fired upon, but without injury: in another place, one of their horses had been cut loose, and carried off. At length, they were so closely beset, that they were obliged to make a retrograde move, lest they should be surprised and overcome. This was the movement that had caused such perplexity to Captain Bonneville.

The whole party now remained encamped for two or three days, to give repose to both men and horses. Some of the trappers, however, pursued their vocations about the neighbouring streams.

While one of them was setting his traps, he heard the tramp of horses; and looking up, beheld a party of Crow braves moving along at no great distance, with a considerable cavalcade. The trapper hastened to conceal himself, but was discerned by the quick eye of the savages. With whoops and yells, they dragged him from

his hiding-place, flourished over his head their tomahawks and scalping-knives, and for a time, the poor trapper gave himself up for lost. Fortunately, the Crows were in a jocose, rather than a sanguinary mood. They amused themselves heartily, for a while, at the expense of his terrors; and after having played off divers Crow pranks and pleasantries, suffered him to depart unharmed. It is true, they stripped him completely; one taking his horse, another his gun, a third his traps, a fourth his blanket; and so on, through all his accoutrements, and even his clothing, until he was stark naked; but then they generously made him a present of an old tattered buffalo robe, and dismissed him, with many complimentary speeches, and much laughter.

When the trapper returned to the camp, in such sorry plight, he was greeted with peals of laughter from his comrades; and seemed more

mortified by the style in which he had been dismissed, than rejoiced at escaping with his life.

A circumstance which he related to Captain Bonneville, gave some insight into the cause of this extreme jocularity on the part of the Crows. They had evidently had a run of luck, and, like winning gamblers, were in high good humour. Among twenty-six fine horses, and some mules, which composed their cavalcade, the trapper recognised a number which had belonged to Fitzpatrick's brigade, when they parted company on the Bighorn. It was supposed, therefore, that these vagabonds had been on his trail, and robbed him of part of his cavalry.

On the day following this affair, three Crows came into Captain Bonneville's camp, with the most easy, innocent, if not impudent air, imaginable; walking about with that imperturbable coolness and unconcern, in which the

Indian rivals the fine gentleman. As they had not been of the set which stripped the trapper, though evidently of the same band, they were not molested. Indeed, Captain Bonneville treated them with his usual kindness and hospitality; permitting them to remain all day in the camp, and even to pass the night there. At the same time, however, he caused a strict watch to be maintained on all their movements; and at night, stationed an armed sentinel near them. The Crows remonstrated against the latter being armed. This only made the captain suspect them to be spies, who meditated treachery: he redoubled, therefore, his precautions. At the same time, he assured his guests, that while they were perfectly welcome to the shelter and comfort of his camp, yet, should any of their tribe venture to approach during the night, they would certainly be shot; which would be a very unfortunate circum-

stance, and much to be deplored. To the latter remark, they fully assented; and shortly afterward, commenced a wild song, or chant, which they kept up for a long time, and in which, they very probably gave their friends, who might be prowling around the camp, notice that the white men were on the alert.

The night passed away without disturbance. In the morning, the three Crow guests were very pressing that Captain Bonneville and his party should accompany them to their camp, which they said was close by. Instead of accepting their invitation, Captain Bonneville took his departure with all possible despatch; eager to be out of the vicinity of such a piratical horde: nor did he relax the diligence of his march, until, on the second day, he reached the banks of the Sweet Water, beyond the limits of the Crow country, and a heavy fall of snow had obliterated all traces of his course.

He now continued on for some few days, at a slower pace, round the point of the mountain towards Green river, and arrived once more at the caches, on the 14th of October.

Here they found traces of the band of Indians who had hunted them in the defile towards the head waters of Wind river. Having lost all trace of them on their way over the mountains, they had turned and followed back their trail down Green river valley to the caches. One of these they had discovered and broken open, but it fortunately contained nothing but fragments of old iron, which they had scattered about in all directions, and then departed. In examining their deserted camp, Captain Bonneville discovered that it numbered thirty-nine fires, and had more reason than ever to congratulate himself on having escaped the clutches of such a formidable band of freebooters.

He now turned his course southward, under

cover of the mountains, and on the 25th of October reached Liberge's ford, a tributary of the Colorado, where he came suddenly upon the trail of this same war party, which had crossed the stream so recently, that the banks were yet wet with the water that had been splashed upon them. To judge from their tracks, they could not be less than three hundred warriors, and apparently of the Crow nation.

Captain Bonneville was extremely uneasy lest this overpowering force should come upon him in some place where he would not have the means of fortifying himself promptly. He now moved towards Hane's fork, another tributary of the Colorado, where he encamped, and remained during the 26th of October. Seeing a large cloud of smoke to the south, he supposed it to arise from some encampment of Shoshonies, and sent scouts to procure informa-

tion, and to purchase a lodge. It was, in fact, a band of Shoshonies, but with them were encamped Fitzpatrick and his party of trappers.

This active leader had an eventful story to relate of his fortunes in the country of the Crows. After parting with Captain Bonneville on the banks of the Bighorn, he made for the west, to trap upon Powder and Tongue rivers. He had between twenty and thirty men with him, and about one hundred horses. So large a cavalcade could not pass through the Crow country without attracting the attention of its freebooting hordes. A large band of Crows were soon on their traces, and came up with them on the 5th of September, just as they had reached Tongue river. The Crow chief came forward with great appearance of friendship, and proposed to Fitzpatrick that they should encamp together. The latter, however, not

having any faith in Crows, declined the invitation, and pitched his camp three miles off. He then rode over, with two or three men, to visit the Crow chief, by whom he was received with great apparent cordiality. In the mean time, however, a party of young braves, who considered them absolved by his distrust from all scruples of honour, made a circuit privately, and dashed into his encampment. Captain Stewart, who had remained there in the absence of Fitzpatrick, behaved with great spirit; but the Crows were too numerous and active. They had got possession of the camp, and soon made booty of every thing—carrying off all the horses. On their way back they met Fitzpatrick returning to his camp; and finished their exploit by rifling and nearly stripping him.

A negotiation now took place between the plundered white men and the triumphant

Crows; what eloquence and management Fitzpatrick made use of, we do not know, but he succeeded in prevailing upon the Crow chieftain to return him his horses and many of his traps; together with his rifles and a few rounds of ammunition for each man. He then set out with all speed to abandon the Crow country, before he should meet with any fresh disasters.

After his departure the consciences of some of the most orthodox Crows pricked them sorely for having suffered such a cavalcade to escape out of their hands. Anxious to wipe off so foul a stigma on the reputation of the Crow nation, they followed on his trail, nor quit hovering about him on his march until they had stolen a number of his best horses and mules. It was, doubtless, this same band which came upon the lonely trapper on the Popo Agie, and generously gave him an old buffalo robe in exchange for

his rifle, his traps, and all his accoutrements. With these anecdotes, we shall, for the present, take our leave of the Crow country and its vagabond chivalry.

CHAPTER XI.

A REGION OF NATURAL CURIOSITIES—THE PLAIN OF WHITE CLAY—HOT SPRINGS—THE BEER SPRING—DEPARTURE TO SEEK THE FREE TRAPPERS—PLAIN OF PORTNEUF—LAVA—CHASMS AND GULLIES—BANNECK INDIANS—THEIR HUNT OF THE BUFFALO—HUNTERS' FEAST—TRENCHER HEROES—BULLYING OF AN ABSENT FOE—THE DAMP COMRADE—THE INDIAN SPY—MEETING WITH HODGKISS—HIS ADVENTURES—POORDEVIL INDIANS—TRIUMPH OF THE BANNECKS—BLACKFEET POLICY IN WAR.

Crossing an elevated ridge, Captain Bonneville now came upon Bear river, which, from its source to its entrance into the Great Salt lake, describes the figure of a horseshoe. One of the principal head waters of this river, although supposed to abound with beaver, has

never been visited by the trapper; rising among rugged mountains, and being barricaded by fallen pine-trees and tremendous precipices.

Proceeding down this river, the party encamped, on the 6th of November, at the outlet of a lake about thirty miles long, and from two to three miles in width, completely embedded in low ranges of mountains, and connected with Bear river by an impassable swamp. It is called the Little lake, to distinguish it from the great one of salt water.

On the 10th of November Captain Bonneville visited a place in the neighbourhood which is quite a region of natural curiosities. An area of about half a mile square presents a level surface of white clay, or fullers' earth, perfectly spotless, resembling a great slab of Parian marble, or a sheet of dazzling snow. The effect is strikingly beautiful at all times; in summer, when it is surrounded with verdure,

or in autumn, when it contrasts its bright immaculate surface with the withered herbage. Seen from a distant eminence, it then shines like a mirror, set in the brown landscape.

Around this plain are clustered numerous springs of various sizes and temperatures. One of them, of scalding heat, boils furiously, and incessantly, rising to the height of two or three feet. In another place, there is an aperture in the earth, from which rushes a column of steam that forms a perpetual cloud. The ground for some distance around sounds hollow, and startles the solitary trapper, as he hears the tramp of his horse giving the sound of a muffled drum. He pictures to himself a mysterious gulf below, a place of hidden fires: and gazes round him with sensations of awe and uneasiness.

The most noted curiosity, however, of this singular region, is the *Beer spring*, of which trappers give wonderful accounts. They are

said to turn aside from their route through the country to drink of its waters, with as much eagerness as the Arab seeks some famous well of the desert. Captain Bonneville describes it as having the taste of beer. His men drunk it with avidity, and in copious draughts. It did not appear to him to possess any medicinal properties, or to produce any peculiar effects. The Indians, however, refuse to taste it, and endeavour to persuade the white men from doing so.

We have heard this also called the Soda spring; and described as containing iron and sulphur. It is probable that it possesses some of the properties of the Ballston water.

The time had now arrived for Captain Bonneville to go in quest of the party of free trappers, whom he had detached in the beginning of July, under the command of Mr. Hodgkiss, to trap upon the head waters of Salmon river.

His intention was to unite them with the party with which he was at present travelling, that all might go into quarters together for the winter. Accordingly, on the 11th of November, he took a temporary leave of his band, appointing a rendezvous on Snake river, and, accompanied by three men, set out upon his journey.

His route lay across the plain of the Portneuf, a tributary stream of Snake river, called after an unfortunate Canadian trapper, murdered by the Indians. The whole country through which he passed, bore evidence of volcanic convulsions and conflagrations in the olden time. Great masses of lava lay scattered about in every direction; the crags and cliffs had apparently been under the action of fire; the rocks in some places seemed to have been in a state of fusion; the plain was rent and split with

deep chasms and gullies, some of which were partly filled with lava.

They had not proceeded far, however, before they saw plainly a party of horsemen, galloping full tilt towards them. They instantly turned, and made full speed for the covert of a woody stream, to fortify themselves among the trees. The Indians now came to a halt, and one of them came forward alone. He reached Captain Bonneville and his men just as they were dismounting and about to post themselves. A few words dispelled all uneasiness. It was a party of twenty-five Banneck Indians, friendly to the whites; and they proposed, through their envoy, that both parties should encamp together, and hunt the buffalo, of which they had discovered several large herds hard by. Captain Bonneville cheerfully assented to their proposition, being curious to see their manner of hunting.

Both parties accordingly encamped together on a convenient spot, and prepared for the hunt. The Indians first posted a boy on a small hill near the camp, to keep a look out for enemies. The "runners," then, as they are called, mounted on fleet horses, and armed with bows and arrows, moved slowly and cautiously toward the buffalo, keeping as much as possible out of sight, in hollows and ravines.

When within a proper distance, a signal was given, and they all opened at once like a pack of hounds, with a full chorus of yells, dashing into the midst of the herds, and launching their arrows to the right and left. The plain seemed absolutely to shake under the tramp of the buffalo, as they scoured off. The cows in headlong panic, the bulls furious with rage, uttering deep roars, and occasionally turning with a desperate rush upon their pursuers.

Nothing could surpass the spirit, grace, and

dexterity, with which the Indians managed their horses; wheeling and coursing among the affrighted herd, and launching their arrows with unerring aim. In the midst of the apparent confusion, they selected their victims with perfect judgment, generally aiming at the fattest of the cows, the flesh of the bull being nearly worthless, at this season of the year.

In a few minutes, each of the hunters had crippled three or four cows. A single shot was sufficient for the purpose, and the animal, once maimed, was left to be completely despatched at the end of the chase. Frequently, a cow was killed on the spot by a single arrow. In one instance, Captain Bonneville saw an Indian shoot his arrow completely through the body of a cow, so that it struck in the ground beyond. The bulls, however, are not so easily killed as the cows, and always cost the hunters several arrows; sometimes making battle upon

the horses, and chasing them furiously, though severely wounded, with the darts still sticking in their flesh.

The grand scamper of the hunt being over, the Indians proceeded to despatch the animals that had been disabled; then cutting up the carcasses, they returned with loads of meat to the camp, where the choicest pieces were soon roasting before large fire, and a hunter's feast succeeded; at which Captain Bonneville and his men were qualified, by previous fasting, to perform their parts with great vigour.

Some men are said to wax valorous upon a full stomach, and such seemed to be the case with the Banneck braves, who, in proportion as they crammed themselves with buffalo beef, grew stout of heart, until, the supper at an end, they began to chant war songs, setting forth their mighty deeds, and the victories they had gained over the Blackfeet. Warming with the

theme, and inflating themselves with their own eulogies, these magnanimous heroes of the trencher would start up, advance a short distance beyond the light of the fire, and apostrophize most vehemently their Blackfeet enemies, as though they had been within hearing. Ruffling, and swelling, and snorting, and slapping their breasts, and brandishing their arms, they would vociferate all their exploits; reminding the Blackfeet how they had drenched their towns in tears and blood; enumerate the blows they had inflicted, the warriors they had slain, the scalps they had brought off in triumph.

Then, having said every thing that could stir a man's spleen or pique his valour, they would dare their imaginary hearers, now that the Bannecks were few in number, to come and take their revenge — receiving no reply to this valorous bravado, they would con-

clude by all kinds of sneers and insults, deriding the Blackfeet for dastards and poltroons, that dared not accept their challenge. Such is the kind of swaggering and rodomontade in which the "red men" are apt to indulge in their vainglorious moments; for, with all their vaunted taciturnity, they are vehemently prone at times to become eloquent about their exploits, and to sound their own trumpet.

Having vented their valour in this fierce effervescence, the Banneck braves gradually calmed down, lowered their crests, smoothed their ruffled feathers, and betook themselves to sleep, without placing a single guard over their camp; so that, had the Blackfeet taken them at their word, but few of these braggart heroes might have survived for any further boasting.

On the following morning, Captain Bonneville purchased a supply of buffalo meat from his braggadocio friends; who, with all their vapouring, were in fact a very forlorn horde, destitute of fire-arms, and of almost every thing that constitutes riches in savage life. The bargain concluded, the Bannecks set off for their village, which was situated, they said, at the mouth of the Portneuf, and Captain Bonneville and his companions shaped their course towards Snake river.

Arrived on the banks of that river, he found it rapid and boisterous, but not too deep to be forded. In traversing it, however, one of the horses was swept suddenly from his footing, and his rider was flung from the saddle into the middle of the stream. Both horse and horseman were extricated without any damage, excepting that

the latter was completely drenched, so that it was necessary to kindle a fire to dry him.

While they were thus occupied, one of the party looking up, perceived an Indian scout cautiously reconnoitring them from the summit of a neighbouring hill. The moment he found himself discovered he disappeared behind the hill. From his furtive movements, Captain Bonneville suspected him to be a scout from the Blackfeet camp, and that he had gone to report what he had seen to his companions.

It would not do to loiter in such a neighbourhood, so the kindling of the fire was abandoned, the drenched horseman mounted in dripping condition, and the little band pushed forward directly into the plain going at a smart pace, until they had gained a

considerable distance from the place of supposed danger. Here encamping for the night, in the midst of abundance of sage, or worm wood, which afforded fodder for their horses, they kindled a huge fire for the benefit of their damp comrade, and then proceeded to prepare a sumptuous supper of buffalo humps and ribs, and other choice bits, which they had brought with them.

After a hearty repast, relished with an appetite unknown to city epicures, they stretched themselves upon their couches of skins, and under the starry canopy of heaven, enjoyed the sound and sweet sleep of hardy and well-fed mountaineers.

They continued on their journey for several days, without any incident worthy of notice, and on the 19th of November, came upon traces of the party of which they were

in search; such as burnt patches of prairie, and deserted camping grounds. All these were carefully examined, to discover by their freshness or antiquity the probable time that the trappers had left them; at length, after much wandering and investigating, they came upon the regular trail of the hunting party, which led into the mountains, and following it up briskly, came about two o'clock in the afternoon of the 20th, upon the encampment of Hodgkiss and his band of free trappers, in the bosom of a mountain valley.

It will be recollected that these free trappers who were masters of themselves and their movements, had refused to accompany Captain Bonneville back to Green river in the preceding month of July, preferring to trap about the upper waters of the Salmon

river, where they expected to find plenty of beaver, and a less dangerous neighbourhood. Their hunt had not been very successful. They had penetrated the great range of mountains among which some of the upper branches of the Salmon river take their rise, but had become so entangled among immense and almost impassable barricades of fallen pines, and so impeded by tremendous precipices, that a great part of their season had been wasted among those mountains. At one time, they had made their way through them, and reached the Boissée river; but meeting with a band of Banneck Indians, from whom they apprehended hostilities they had again taken shelter among the mountains, where they were found by Captain Bonneville.

In the neighbourhood of their encampment,

the captain had the good fortune to meet with a family of those wanderers of the mountains, emphatically called "les dignes de pitie," or Poordevil Indians. These, however, appear to have forfeited the title, for they had with them a fine lot of skins of beaver, elk, deer, and mountain sheep. These, Captain Bonneville purchased from them at a fair valuation, and sent them off astonished at their own wealth, and no doubt objects of envy to all their pitiful tribe.

Being now reinforced by Hodgkiss and his band of free trappers, Captain Bonneville put himself at the head of the united parties, and set out to rejoin those he had recently left at the Beer spring, that they might all go into winter quarters on Snake river. On his route he encountered many heavy falls of snow, which melted almost

immediately, so as not to impede his march, and on the 4th of December, he found his other party, encamped at the very place where he had partaken in the buffalo hunt with the Bannecks.

That braggart horde was encamped but about three miles off, and were just then in high glee and festivity, and more swaggering than ever, celebrating a prodigious victory. It appeared that a party of their braves being out on a hunting excursion, discovered a band of Blackfeet moving, as they thought, to surprise their hunting camp. The Bannecks immediately posted themselves on each side of a dark ravine, through which the enemy must pass, and, just as they were entangled in the midst of it, and attacked them with great fury.

The Blackfeet, struck with sudden panic,

threw off their buffalo robes and fled, leaving one of their warriors dead on the spot. The victors eagerly gathered up the spoils; but their greatest prize was the scalp of the Blackfoot brave. This they bore off in triumph to their village, where it had ever since been an object of the greatest exultation and rejoicing. It had been elevated on a pole in the centre of the village, where the warriors had celebrated the scalp dance round it, with war feasts, war songs, and warlike harangues. It had then been given up to the women and boys; who had paraded it up and down the village with shouts and chants, and antic dances; occasionally saluting it with all kinds of taunts, invectives, and revilings.

The Blackfeet, in this affair, do not appear to have acted up to the character which has rendered them objects of such terror. Indeed, their conduct in war, to the inexpe-

rienced observer, is full of inconsistencies; at one time they are headlong in courage, and heedless of danger; at another time, cautious almost to cowardice.

To understand these apparent incongruities, one must know their principles of warfare. A war party, however triumphant, if they lose a warrior in the fight, bring back a cause of mourning to their people, which casts a shade over the glory of their achievement. Hence the Indian is often less fierce and reckless in general battle, than he is in a private brawl; and the chiefs are checked in their boldest undertakings by the fear of sacrificing their warriors.

This peculiarity is not confined to the Blackfeet. Among the Osages, says Captain Bonneville, when a warrior falls in battle, his comrades, though they may have fought with consummate valour, and won a glorious

victory, will leave their arms upon the field of battle, and returning home with dejected countenances, will halt without the encampment, and wait until the relatives of the slain come forth to invite them to mingle again with their people.

CHAPTER XII.

WINTER CAMP AT THE PORTNEUF—FINE SPRINGS—THE BANNECK INDIANS—THEIR HONESTY—CAPTAIN BONNEVILLE PREPARES FOR AN EXPEDITION — CHRISTMAS — THE AMERICAN FALLS—WILD SCENERY — FISHING FALLS—SNAKE INDIANS—SCENERY ON THE BRUNEAU—VIEW OF VOLCANIC COUNTRY FROM A MOUNTAIN—POWDER RIVER — SHOSHOKOES, OR ROOT DIGGERS—THEIR CHARACTER, HABITS, HABITATIONS, DOGS — VANITY AT ITS LAST SHIFT.

In establishing his winter camp near the Portneuf, Captain Bonneville had drawn off to some little distance from his Banneck

friends, to avoid all annoyance from their intimacy or intrusions. In so doing, however, he had been obliged to take up his quarters on the extreme edge of the flat land, where he was encompassed with ice and snow, and had nothing better for his horses to subsist on, than wormwood. The Bannecks, on the contrary, were encamped among fine springs of water, where there was grass in abundance. Some of these springs gush out of the earth in sufficient quantity to turn a mill; and furnish beautiful streams, clear as crystal, and full of trout of a large size; which may be seen darting about the transparent water.

Winter now began to set in regularly. The snow had fallen frequently, and in large quantities, and covered the ground to the depth of a foot; and the continued coldness of the weather prevented any thaw.

By degrees, a distrust which at first subsisted between the Indians and the trappers, subsided, and gave way to mutual confidence and good-will. A few presents convinced the chiefs that the white men were their friends: nor were the white men wanting in proofs of the honesty and good faith of their savage neighbours. Occasionally, the deep snow and the want of fodder obliged them to turn their weakest horses out to roam in quest of sustenance. If they at any time strayed to the camp of the Bannecks they were immediately brought back. It must be confessed, however, that if the stray horse happened, by any chance, to be in vigorous plight and good condition, though he was equally sure to be returned by the honest Bannecks, yet, it was always after the lapse of several days, and in a very gaunt and jaded state; and always with the remark,

that they had found him a long way off. The uncharitable were apt to surmise that he had, in the interim, been well used up in a buffalo hunt: but those accustomed to Indian morality in the matter of horse-flesh, considered it a singular evidence of honesty, that he should be brought back at all.

Being convinced, therefore, from these and other circumstances, that his people were encamped in the neighbourhood of a tribe as honest as they were valiant; and satisfied that they would pass their winter unmolested; Captain Bonneville prepared for a reconnoitring expedition of great extent and peril. This was, to penetrate to the Hudson's Bay establishments on the banks of the Columbia, and to make himself acquainted with the country and the Indian tribes; it

being one part of his scheme to establish a trading post somewhere on the lower part of the river, so as to participate in the trade lost to the United States by the capture of Astoria. This expedition, would of course, take him through the Snake river country, and across the Blue mountains; the scenes of so much hardship and disaster to Hunt and Crooks, and their Astorian bands, who first explored it: and he would have to pass through it in the same frightful season; the depth of winter.

The idea of risk and hardship, however, only seemed to stimulate the adventurous spirit of the captain. He chose three companions for his journey; put up a small stock of necessaries in the most portable form, and selected five horses and mules for themselves and their baggage. He proposed to rejoin his band in

the early part of March, at the winter encampment near the Portneuf.

All these arrangements being completed, he mounted his horse on Christmas morning, and set off with his three comrades. They halted a little beyond the Banneck camp, and made their Christmas dinner; which, if not a very merry, was a very hearty one; after which they resumed their journey.

They were obliged to travel slowly, to spare their horses; for the snow had increased in depth to eighteen inches: and though somewhat packed and frozen, was not sufficiently so to yield firm footing. Their route lay to the west, down along the left side of Snake river; and they were several days in reaching the first, or American falls. The banks of the river, for a considerable distance, both above and below the falls, have a volcanic character: masses of basaltic rock are piled one upon another; the

water makes its way through their broken chasms, boiling through narrow channels, or pitching in beautiful cascades over ridges of basaltic columns.

Beyond these falls, they came to a picturesque, but inconsiderable stream, called the Cassié. It runs through a level valley, about four miles wide, where the soil is good; but the prevalent coldness and dryness of the climate is unfavourable to vegetation. Near to this stream there is a small mountain of mica slate, including garnets. Granite, in small blocks, is likewise seen in this neighbourhood, and white sandstone. From this river, the travellers had a prospect of the snowy heights of the Salmon river mountains to the north; the nearest, at least fifty miles distant.

In pursuing his course westward, Captain Bonneville generally kept several miles from Snake river, crossing the heads of its tributary

streams; though he often found the open country so encumbered by volcanic rocks, as to render travelling extremely difficult. Whenever he approached Snake river, he found it running through a broad chasm, with steep, perpendicular sides of basaltic rock.

After several days' travel across a level plain, he came to a part of the river which filled him with astonishment and admiration. As far as the eye could reach, the river was walled in by perpendicular cliffs two hundred and fifty feet high, beetling like dark and gloomy battlements, while blocks and fragments lay in masses at their feet, in the midst of the boiling and whirling current. Just above, the whole stream pitched in one cascade above forty feet in height, with a thundering sound, casting up a volume of spray that hung in the air like a silver mist. These are called by some the Fishing falls; as the salmon are taken here in

immense quantities. They cannot get by these falls.

After encamping at this place all night, Captain Bonneville, at sunrise the next morning, descended with his party through a narrow ravine, or rather crevice in the vast wall of basaltic rock which bordered the river; this being the only mode, for many miles, of getting to the margin of the stream.

The snow lay in a thin crust along the banks of the river, so that their travelling was much more easy than it had been hitherto. There were foot tracks, also, made by the natives, which greatly facilitated their progress.

Occasionally, they met the inhabitants of this wild region; a timid race, and but scantily provided with the necessaries of life. Their dress consisted of a mantle about four feet square, formed of strips of rabbit skins sewed together: this they hung over their shoulders, in

the ordinary Indian mode of wearing the blanket. Their weapons were bows and arrows; the latter tipped with obsidian, which abounds in the neighbourhood. Their huts were shaped like haystacks, and constructed of branches of willow covered with long grass, so as to be warm and comfortable. Occasionally, they were surrounded by small inclosures of wormwood, about three feet high, which gave them a cottage-like appearance. Three or four of these tenements were occasionally grouped together in some wild and striking situation, and had a picturesque effect. Sometimes they were in sufficient number to form a small hamlet. From these people, Captain Bonneville's party frequently purchased salmon, dried in an admirable manner, as were likewise the roes. This seemed to be their prime article of food; but they were extremely anxious to get buffalo meat in exchange.

The high walls and rocks, within which the travellers had been so long enclosed, now occasionally presented openings, through which they were enabled to ascend to the plain, and to cut off considerable bends of the river.

Throughout the whole extent of this vast and singular chasm, the scenery of the river is said to be of the most wild and romantic character. The rocks present every variety of masses and grouping. Numerous small streams come rushing and boiling through narrow clefts and ravines: one of a considerable size issued from the face of a precipice, within twenty-five feet of its summit; and after running in nearly a horizontal line for about one hundred feet, fell by numerous small cascades, to the rocky bank of the river.

In its career through this vast and singular defile, Snake river is upwards of three hundred yards wide, and as clear as spring water. Some-

times it steals along with a tranquil and noiseless course; at other times, for miles and miles, it dashes on in a thousand rapids, wild and beautiful to the eye, and lulling the ear with the soft tumult of plashing waters.

Many of the tributary streams of Snake river, rival it in the wildness and picturesqueness of their scenery. That called the Bruneau is particularly cited. It runs through a tremendous chasm, rather than a valley, extending upwards of a hundred and fifty miles. You come upon it on a sudden, in traversing a level plain. It seems as if you could throw a stone across from cliff to cliff; yet, the valley is near two thousand feet deep: so that the river looks like an inconsiderable stream. Basaltic rocks rise perpendicularly, so that it is impossible to get from the plain to the water, or from the river margin to the plain. The current is bright and limpid. Hot springs are found on the borders of this

river. One bursts out of the cliffs forty feet above the river, in a stream sufficient to turn a mill, and sends up a cloud of vapor.

We find a characteristic picture of this volcanic region of mountains and streams, furnished by the journal of Captain Wyeth, which lies before us; who ascended a peak in the neighbourhood we are describing. From this summit, the country, he says, appears an indescribable chaos; the tops of the hills exhibi the same strata as far as the eye can reach; and appear to have once formed the level of the country; and the valleys to be formed by the sinking of the earth, rather than the rising of the hills. Through the deep cracks and chasms thus formed, the rivers and brooks make their way, which renders it difficult to follow them. All these basaltic channels are called cut rocks by the trappers. Many of the mountain streams disappear in the plains;

either absorbed by their thirsty soil, and by the porous surface of the lava, or swallowed up in gulfs, and chasms.*

* The above picturesque description of this "region of mountains and streams," calls to our recollection the following animated picture of the scenery of the Winnepeek river.—KEATING. [*English Editor.*]

"It was at our evening's encampment that the splendid scenery of the Winnepeek first displayed itself to our view, realizing all that the mind could have fancied of wild and sublime beauty, and far surpassing any that we had ever seen. The characters which we admire in the scenery of the Winnepeek, are the immense volume of waters, the extreme rapidity of the current, the great variety of form which the cascades and falls present, and the incomparable wildness of the rocky scenery which produces these falls, and which contrasts by its gloom, its immoveable and unchangeable features, with the bright dazzling effect of the silvery sheet of water, passing from a smooth and unruffled expanse, to a broken and foaming cataract. It is in the effect of the rocky bed of the Winnepeek, that its numerous falls surpass all others which we have seen; the cataract of Niagara, which far exceeds them in volume, is uniform and monotonous in comparison; the horizontal ledges of secondary rocks or

On the 12th of January (1834), Captain Bonneville reached Powder river; much the largest

the latter are as far inferior in picturesque effect to the dark water-worn granite and sienite of the former, as the height of the bluffs at Niagara exceeds that of the rocky banks of the Winnepeek. The falls on this river have another advantage, which is, that the whole country has a picturesque appearance, which prepares the mind, and keeps it in a proper disposition, to appreciate the splendour of its cataracts, while the country around Niagara is flat, uniform, and uninteresting. On the Winnepeek we have constantly in view changes in the rocks, which contribute to those of the surface; they present at times the schistose appearance of a gneiss and mica-slate, which disappears at the recurrence of the dark-coloured granite or reddish sienite; these being filled with veins of felspar, display, on a gigantic scale, the beautiful striped appearance, which has given to some of the marbles of Italy their well-deserved celebrity. The place of our encampment was characterized by one of those peculiar effects of water, which, once seen, leave an indelible impression upon the mind. After having passed over numerous rocks, which form diversified cascades (the whole height of which is about thirty feet), the water is suddenly received into a basin enclosed by high rocks, where it is

stream that he had seen since leaving the Portneuf. He struck it about three miles above its

forced to sojourn awhile, by the small size of the aperture through which it issues; here the waters present the characters of a troubled ocean, whose waves rise high and beat against the adjoining shores, and against the few rocky islands which are seen in the midst of this basin; it is to this character that the spot owes the name which it receives from the natives, "the fall of the moving waters." They may be called the lower falls of Winnepeek river. We reached them in time to watch the beautiful effect of the setting sun, whose beams, reflected by the stream, imparted to it the appearance of a sea on fire. This was soon replaced by the moon, which cast a more placid light upon the waves, and heightened the charm of the scenery by the melancholy mantle which it spread over it. One of the most imposing characters of these falls is the tremendous noise which they produce, and which, in comparison to their size, is thought to exceed that of Niagara, Montmorency, Schaffhousen, St. Anthony, the Cohoes, or other falls which any of our party have ever seen. A scarcity of vegetation covers these rocks, and contributes to the picturesque effect of the spot. Instead of the heavy forests which formerly sheltered Niagara, we have here a spare growth of aspen,

entrance into Snake river. Here he found himself above the lower narrows and defiles of the latter river, and in an open and level country.

The natives now made their appearance in considerable numbers, and evinced the most insatiable curiosity respecting the white men; sitting in groups for hours together, exposed to the bleakest winds, merely for the pleasure of gazing upon the strangers, and watching every movement. These are of that branch of the great Snake tribe called Shoshokoes, or Root

birch, spruce, and other evergreens, whose size, generally small, adds to the wild and barren appearance of the rocks. The night which we spent near these falls, was one of the most interesting in the expedition; our tents were pitched so that we had a view of the splendid effect arising from the play of the moonbeams upon the surface of this ocean-like basin, and our eyes were constantly bent upon it until the noise of the cataract lulled us to sleep."

Diggers, from their subsisting, in a great measure, on the roots of the earth; though they likewise take fish in great quantities, and hunt, in a small way. They are, in general very poor; destitute of most of the comforts of life, and extremely indolent: but a mild, inoffensive race. They differ, in many respects, from the other branch of the Snake tribe, the Shoshonies; who possess horses, are more roving and adventurous, and hunt the buffalo.

On the following day, as Captain Bonneville approached the mouth of Powder river, he discovered at least a hundred families of these Diggers, as they are familiarly called, assembled in one place. The women and children kept at a distance, perched among the rocks and cliffs; their eager curiosity being somewhat dashed with fear. From their elevated posts, they scrutinized the strangers with the most intense earnestness; regarding them with almost as

much awe as if they had been beings of a supernatural order.

The men, however, were by no means so shy and reserved; but importuned Captain Bonneville and his companions excessively by their curiosity. Nothing escaped their notice; and any thing they could lay their hands on, underwent the most minute examination. To get rid of such inquisitive neighbours, the travellers kept on for a considerable distance, before they encamped for the night.

The country, hereabout, was generally level and sandy; producing very little grass, but a considerable quantity of sage or wormwood. The plains were diversified by isolated hills, all cut off, as it were, about the same height, so as to have tabular summits. In this they resembled the isolated hills of the great prairies, east of the Rocky mountains; especially those found on the plains of the Arkansas.

The high precipices which had hitherto walled in the channel of Snake river, had now disappeared; and the banks were of the ordinary height. It should be observed, that the great valleys or plains, through which the Snake river wound its course, were generally of great breadth, extending on each side from thirty to forty miles; where the view was bounded by unbroken ridges of mountains.

The travellers found but little snow in the neighbourhood of Powder river, though the weather continued intensely cold. They learnt a lesson, however, from their forlorn friends, the Root Diggers, which they subsequently found of great service in their wintry wanderings. They frequently observed them to be furnished with long ropes, twisted from the bark of the wormwood. This they used as a slow match, carrying it always lighted. Whenever they wished to warm themselves, they

would gather together a little dry wormwood, apply the match, and in an instant produce a cheering blaze.

Captain Bonneville gives a cheerless account of a village of these Diggers, which he saw in crossing the plain below Powder river. "They live," says he, "without any further protection from the inclemency of the season, than a sort of breakweather, about three feet high, composed of sage (or wormwood), and erected around them in the shape of a half moon." Whenever he met with them, however, they had always a large suite of half-starved dogs: for these animals, in savage as well as in civilized life, seem to be the concomitants of beggary.

These dogs, it must be allowed, were of more use than the beggarly curs of cities. The Indian children used them in hunting the small game of the neighbourhood, such as rabbits and prairie dogs; in which mongrel kind of

chase they acquitted themselves with some credit.

Sometimes the Diggers aspire to nobler game, and succeed in entrapping the antelope, the fleetest animal of the prairies. The process by which this is effected is somewhat singular.

When the snow has disappeared, says Captain Bonneville, and the ground become soft, the women go into the thickest fields of wormwood, and pulling it up in great quantities, construct with it a hedge, about three feet high, enclosing about a hundred acres. A single opening is left for the admission of the game. This done, the women conceal themselves behind the wormwood, and wait patiently for the coming of the antelopes; which sometimes enter this spacious trap in considerable numbers. As soon as they are in, the women give the signal, and the men hasten to play

their part. But one of them enters the pen at a time; and after chasing the terrified animals round the enclosure, is relieved by one of his companions.

In this way, the hunters take their turns, relieving each other, and keeping up a continued pursuit by relays, without fatigue to themselves. The poor antelopes, in the end, are so wearied down, that the whole party of men enter and despatch them with clubs; not one escaping that has entered the enclosure.

The most curious circumstance in this chase is, that an animal so fleet and agile as the antelope, and straining for its life, should range round and round this fated enclosure, without attempting to overleap the low barrier which surrounds it. Such, however, is said to be the fact; and such their only mode of hunting the antelope.

Notwithstanding the absence of all comfort

and convenience in their habitations, and the general squalidness of their appearance, the Shoshokoes do not appear to be destitute of ingenuity. They manufacture good ropes, and even a tolerably fine thread, from a sort of weed found in their neighbourhood: and construct bowls and jugs out of a kind of basket-work formed from small strips of wood plaited: these, by the aid of a little wax, they render perfectly water-tight.

Beside the roots on which they mainly depend for subsistence, they collect great quantities of seed, of various kinds, beaten with one hand out of the tops of the plants into wooden bowls held for that purpose. The seed thus collected is winnowed and parched, and ground between two stones into a kind of meal or flour; which, when mixed with water, forms a very palateable paste or gruel.

Some of these people, more provident and

industrious than the rest, lay up a stock of dried salmon, and other fish, for winter: with these, they were ready to traffic with the travellers for any object of utility in Indian life; giving a large quantity in exchange for an awl, a knife, or a fish-hook. Others were in the most abject state of want and starvation; and would even gather up the fish-bones which the travellers threw away after a repast, warm them over again at the fire, and pick them with the greatest avidity.

The further Captain Bonneville advanced into the country of these Root Diggers, the more evidence he perceived of their rude and forlorn condition. "They were destitute," says he, "of the necessary covering to protect them from the weather: and seemed to be in the most unsophisticated ignorance of any other propriety or advantage in the use of clothing. One old dame had absolutely no-

thing on her person but a thread round her neck, from which was pendant a solitary bead."

What stage of human destitution, however, is too destitute for vanity! Though these naked and forlorn-looking beings had neither toilet to arrange, nor beauty to contemplate, their greatest passion was for a mirror. It was a "great medicine," in their eyes. The sight of one was sufficient, at any time, to throw them into a paroxysm of eagerness and delight; and they were ready to give any thing they had for the smallest fragment in which they might behold their squalid features.

With this simple instance of vanity in its native, but vigorous state, we shall close our remarks on the Root Diggers.

CHAPTER XIII.

TEMPERATURE OF THE CLIMATE—ROOT DIGGERS ON HORSEBACK—AN INDIAN GUIDE—MOUNTAIN PROSPECTS—THE GRAND ROND—DIFFICULTIES ON SNAKE RIVER—A SCRAMBLE OVER THE BLUE MOUNTAINS—SUFFERINGS FROM HUNGER—PROSPECT OF THE IMMAHAH VALLEY—THE EXHAUSTED TRAVELLER.

The temperature of the regions west of the Rocky mountains is much milder than in the same latitudes on the Atlantic side; the upper plains, however, which lie at a distance from the seacoast, are subject in winter to considerable vicissitude; being traversed by lofty "sierras," crowned with perpetual snow, which

often produce flaws and streaks of intense cold.

This was experienced by Captain Bonneville and his companions in their progress westward. At the time when they left the Bannecks, Snake river was frozen hard: as they proceeded, the ice became broken and floating; it gradually disappeared, and the weather became warm and pleasant, as they approached a tributary stream called the Little Wyer; and the soil, which was generally of a watery clay, with occasional intervals of sand, was soft to the tread of the horses.

After a time, however, the mountains approached and flanked the river; the snow lay deep in the valleys, and the current was once more ice-bound.

Here they were visited by a party of Root Diggers, who were apparently rising in the

world, for they had "horse to ride and weapon to wear," and were altogether better clad and equipped than any of the tribe that Captain Bonneville had met with. They were just from the plain of Boisée river, where they had left a number of their tribe, all as well provided as themselves; having guns, horses, and comfortable clothing. All these they obtained from the Lower Nez Percés, with whom they were in habits of frequent traffic. They appeared to have imbibed from that tribe their noncombative principles, being mild and inoffensive in their manners. Like them, also, they had something of religious feelings; for Captain Bonneville observed that, before eating, they washed their hands, and made a short prayer; which he understood was their invariable custom.

From these Indians, he obtained a consi-

derable supply of fish, and an excellent and well-conditioned horse, to replace one which had become too weak for the journey.

The travellers now moved forward with renovated spirits; the snow, it is true, lay deeper and deeper as they advanced, but they trudged on merrily, considering themselves well provided for the journey which could not be of much longer duration.

They had intended to proceed up the banks of Gun creek, a stream which flows into Snake river from the west; but were assured by the natives that the route in that direction was impracticable. The latter advised them to keep along Snake river, where they would not be impeded by the snow.

Taking one of the Diggers for a guide, they set off along the river, and to their joy soon found the country free from snow, as had been predicted, so that their horses once

more had the benefit of tolerable pasturage. Their Digger proved an excellent guide; trudging cheerily in the advance; he made an unsuccessful shot or two at a deer and a beaver; but at night found a rabbit hole, from whence he extracted the occupant, upon which, with the addition of a fish given him by the travellers, he made a hearty supper, and retired to rest, apparently filled with good cheer and good humour.

The next day the travellers came to where the hills closed upon the river, leaving here and there intervals of undulating meadow land. The river was sheeted with ice, broken into hills at long intervals. The Digger guide kept on ahead of the party, crossing and re-crossing the river in pursuit of game, until, unluckily, encountering a brother Digger, he stole off with him without the ceremony of leave-taking.

Being now left to themselves, they proceeded until they came to some Indian huts, the inhabitants of which spoke a language totally different from any they had yet heard. One, however, understood the Nez Percé language, and through him they made inquiries as to their route. These Indians were extremely kind and honest, and furnished them with a small quantity of meat; but none of them could be induced to act as guides.

Immediately in the route of the travellers lay a high mountain, which they ascended with some difficulty. The prospect from the summit was grand but disheartening. Directly before them towered the loftiest peaks of Immahah, rising far higher than the elevated ground on which they stood: on the other hand, they were enabled to scan the course of the river, which, dashing along

through deep chasms, between rocks and precipices, was at length lost in a distant wilderness of mountains, which closed the savage landscape.

The travellers remained for a long time, contemplating with perplexed and anxious eye, this wild congregation of mountain barriers, and seeking to discover some practicable passage. The approach of evening obliged them to give up the task, and to seek some camping ground for the night.

Moving briskly forward, and plunging and tossing through a succession of deep snow drifts, they at length reached a valley known among trappers as the "Grand Rond," which they found entirely free from snow.

This is a beautiful and very fertile valley, about twenty miles long and five or six broad; a bright cold stream called the *Fourche de glace*, or Ice river, runs through it. Its shel-

tered situation, embosomed in mountains, renders it good pasturing ground in the winter time; when the elk come down to it in great numbers, driven out of the mountains by the snow. The Indians then resort to it to hunt. They likewise come to it in the summer time to dig the camash root, of which it produces immense quantities. When this plant is in blossom, the whole valley is tinted by its blue flowers, and looks like the ocean, when overcast by a flood.

After passing a night in this valley, the travellers in the morning scaled the neighbouring hills, to look out for a more eligible route than that upon which they had unluckily fallen; and, after much reconnoitring, determined to make their way once more to the river, and to travel upon the ice when the banks should prove impassable.

On the second day after this determina-

tion, they were again upon Snake river, but contrary to their expectations, it was nearly free from ice. A narrow riband ran along the shore, and sometimes there was a kind of bridge across the stream, formed of old ice and snow.

For a short time, the travellers jogged along the bank with tolerable facility, but at length came to where the river forced its way into the heart of the mountains, winding between tremendous walls of basaltic rock, that rose perpendicularly from the water edge, frowning in bleak and gloomy grandeur.

Here difficulties of all kinds beset their path. The snow was from two to three feet deep, but soft and yielding, so that the horses had no foothold, but kept plunging forward, straining themselves by perpetual efforts. Sometimes the crags and promontories forced

them upon the narrow riband of ice that bordered the shore: sometimes they had to scramble over vast masses of rock that had tumbled from the impending precipices; sometimes they had to cross the stream upon the hazardous bridges of ice and snow, sinking to the knee at every step; sometimes they had to scale slippery acclivities, and to pass along narrow cornices, glazed with ice and sleet, a shouldering wall of rock on one side, a yawning precipice on the other; where a single false step would have been fatal. In a lower and less dangerous pass, two of their horses actually fell into the river; one was saved with much difficulty, but the boldness of the shore prevented their rescuing the other, and he was swept away by the rapid current.

In this way they struggled forward, manfully braving difficulties and dangers, until they

came to where the bed of the river was narrowed to a mere chasm, with perpendicular walls of rock that defied all further progress. Turning their faces now to the mountain, they boldly endeavoured to cross directly over it; but, after clambering nearly to the summit, they again found their path closed by insurmountable barriers.

Nothing now remained but to retrace their steps. To descend a craggy mountain, however, is more difficult and dangerous than to ascend it. They had to lower themselves, as it were, cautiously and slowly, from steep to steep; and, while they managed with difficulty to maintain their own footing, to aid their horses by holding on firmly to the rope halters, as the poor animals stumbled among slippery rocks, or slid down icy declivities.

Thus, after a day of intense cold, and severe and incessant toil, amidst the wildest of scenery,

they managed, about nightfall, to reach the camping ground, from which they had started in the morning, and for the first time in the course of their rugged and perilous expedition, felt their hearts quailing under their multiplied hardships.

A hearty supper, a tranquillizing pipe, and a sound night's sleep put them all in better mood, and in the morning they held a consultation as to their future movements. About four miles behind, they had remarked a small ridge of mountains approaching closely to the river. It was determined to scale this ridge, and seek a passage into the valley which must lie beyond. Should they fail in this, but one alternative remained. To kill their horses, dry the flesh for provisions, make boats of the hides, and in these, commit themselves to the stream—a measure hazardous in the extreme.

A short march brought them to the foot of

the mountain, but its steep and cragged sides almost discouraged hope. The only chance of scaling it was by broken masses of rock, piled one upon another, which formed a succession of crags, reaching nearly to the summit. Up these they wrought their way with indescribable difficulty and peril, in a zigzag course: climbing from rock to rock; and helping their horses up after them, which scrambled among the crags like mountain goats; now and then dislodging some huge stone, which, the moment they had left it, would roll down the mountain, crashing and rebounding with terrific din.

It was some time after dark before they reached a kind of platform on the summit of the mountain, where they could venture to encamp. The winds, which swept this naked height, had whirled all the snow into the valley beneath, so that the horses found tolerable winter pasturage on the dry grass which re-

mained exposed. The travellers, though hungry in the extreme, were fain to make a very frugal supper; for they saw their journey was likely to be prolonged much beyond the anticipated term.

In fact, on the following day they discerned that, although already at a great elevation, they were only as yet upon the shoulder of the mountain. It proved to be a great sierra, or ridge, of immense height, running parallel to the course of the river, swelling by degrees to lofty peaks, but the outline gashed by deep and precipitous ravines. This, in fact, was a part of the chain of Blue mountains, in which the first adventurers to Astoria experienced such hardships.

We will not pretend to accompany the travellers step by step in this tremendous mountain scramble, into which they had unconsciously betrayed themselves. Day after day

did their toil continue; peak after peak had they to traverse, struggling with difficulties and hardships known only to the mountain trapper. As their course lay north, they had to ascend the southern faces of the heights, where the sun had melted the snow, so as to render the ascent wet and slippery, and to keep both men and horses continually on the strain; while on the northern sides, the snow lay in such heavy masses, that it was necessary to beat a track, down which the horses might be led. Every now and then, also, their way was impeded by tall and numerous pines, some of which had fallen, and lay in every direction.

In the midst of these toils and hardships, their provisions gave out. For three days they were without food, and so reduced that they could scarcely drag themselves along. At length one of the mules, being about to give out from fatigue and famine, they hastened to

despatch him. Husbanding this miserable supply, they dried the flesh, and for three days subsisted upon the nutriment extracted from the bones. As to the meat, it was packed and preserved as long as they could do without it, not knowing how long they might remain bewildered in these desolate regions.

One of the men was now despatched ahead, to reconnoitre the country, and to discover, if possible, some more practicable route. In the mean time, the rest of the party moved on slowly.

After a lapse of three days, the scout rejoined them. He informed them that Snake river ran immediately below the sierra or mountainous ridge, upon which they were travelling; that it was free from precipices, and was at no great distance from them in a direct line; but that it would be impossible for them to reach it without making a weary circuit. Their only

course would be to cross the mountain ridge to the left.

Up this mountain, therefore, the weary travellers directed their steps; and the ascent in their present weak and exhausted state, was one of the severest parts of this most painful journey. For two days were they toiling slowly from cliff to cliff, beating at every step a path through the snow for their faltering horses. At length they reached the summit, where the snow was blown off; but in descending on the opposite side, they were often plunging through deep drifts, which were piled in the hollows and ravines.

Their provisions were now exhausted, and they and their horses almost ready to give out with fatigue and hunger; when one afternoon, just as the sun was sinking behind a blue line of distant mountain, they came to the brow of a height from which they beheld the smooth

valley of the Immahah stretched out in smiling verdure below them.

The sight inspired almost a frenzy of delight. Roused to new ardour, they forgot, for a time, their fatigues, and hurried down the mountain, dragging their jaded horses after them, and sometimes compelling them to slide a distance of thirty or forty feet at a time.

At length they reached the banks of the Immahah. The young grass was just beginning to sprout, and the whole valley wore an aspect of softness, verdure, and repose, heightened by the contrast of the frightful region from which they had just descended. To add to their joy, they observed Indian trails along the margin of the stream, and other signs, which gave them reason to believe that there was an encampment of the Lower Nez Percés in the neighbourhood, as it was within the accus-

tomed range of that pacific and hospitable tribe.

The prospect of a supply of food stimulated them to new exertion, and they continued on as fast as the enfeebled state of themselves and their steeds would permit. At length, one of the men, more exhausted than the rest, threw himself upon the grass, and declared he could go no further. It was in vain to attempt to rouse him; his spirit had given out, and his replies only showed the dogged apathy of despair. His companions, therefore, encamped on the spot, kindled a blazing fire, and searched about for roots with which to strengthen and revive him.

They all then made a starveling repast; but gathering round the fire, talked over past dangers and troubles, soothed themselves with the persuasion that all were now at an end, and

went to sleep with the comforting hope that the morrow would bring them into plentiful quarters.

CHAPTER XIV.

PROGRESS IN THE VALLEY—AN INDIAN CAVALIER—THE CAPTAIN FALLS INTO A LETHARGY—A NEZ PERCE PATRIARCH—HOSPITABLE TREATMENT—THE BALD HEAD—BARGAINING—VALUE OF AN OLD PLAID CLOAK—THE FAMILY HORSE—THE COST OF AN INDIAN PRESENT.

A TRANQUIL night's rest had sufficiently restored the broken-down traveller, to enable him to resume his wayfaring; and all hands set forward on the Indian trail. With all their eagerness to arrive within reach of succour, such was their feeble and emaciated condition, that they advanced but slowly. Nor is it a

matter of surprise that they should almost have lost heart, as well as strength.

It was now, the 16th of February, fifty-three days that they had been travelling in the midst of winter; exposed to all kinds of privations and hardships: and for the last twenty days, they had been entangled in the wild and desolate labyrinths of the snowy mountains; climbing and descending icy precipices; and nearly starved with cold and hunger.

All the morning they continued following the Indian trail, without seeing a human being; and were beginning to be discouraged, when, about noon, they discovered a horseman at a distance. He was coming directly towards them; but on discovering them, suddenly reined up his steed, came to a halt, and, after reconnoitring them for a time with great earnestness, seemed about to make a cautious retreat.

They eagerly made signs of peace, and endeavoured, with the utmost anxiety, to induce him to approach. He remained for some time in doubt; but at length, having satisfied himself that they were not enemies, came galloping up to them.

He was a fine, haughty-looking savage, fancifully decorated, and mounted on a high-mettled steed with gaudy trappings and equipments. It was evident that he was a warrior of some consequence among his tribe. His whole deportment had something in it of barbaric dignity: he felt, perhaps, his temporary superiority in personal array, and in the spirit of his steed, to the poor, ragged, travel-worn trappers, and their half-starved horses.

Approaching them with an air of protection, he gave them his hand, and, in the Nez Percé language, invited them to his camp, which was only a few miles distant; where he had plenty

to eat, and plenty of horses; and would cheerfully share his good things with them.

His hospitable invitation was joyfully accepted: he lingered but a moment to give directions by which they might find his camp; and then, wheeling round, and giving the reins to his mettlesome steed, was soon out of sight. The travellers followed, with gladdened hearts, but at a snail's pace; for their poor horses could scarcely drag one leg after the other.

Captain Bonneville, however, experienced a sudden and singular change of feeling. Hitherto, the necessity of conducting his party, and of providing against every emergency, had kept his mind upon the stretch, and his whole system braced and excited. In no one instance had he flagged in spirit, or felt disposed to succumb. Now, however, that all danger was over, and the march of a few miles would bring them to repose and abundance, his energies

suddenly deserted him; and every faculty, mental and physical, was totally relaxed.

He had not proceeded two miles from the point where he had had the interview with the Nez Percé chief, when he threw himself upon the earth, without the power or will to move a muscle, or exert a thought, and sunk almost instantly into a profound and dreamless sleep. His companions again came to a halt, and encamped beside him: and there they passed the night.

The next morning Captain Bonneville awakened from his long and heavy sleep, much refreshed; and they all resumed their creeping progress. They had not been long on the march, when eight or ten of the Nez Percé tribe came galloping to meet them, leading fresh horses to bear them to their camp. Thus gallantly mounted, they felt new life infused into their languid frames, and dashing for-

ward, were soon at the lodges of the Nez Percés.

Here they found about twelve families living together, under the patriarchal sway of an ancient and venerable chief. He received them with the hospitality of the golden age; and with something of the same kind of fare: for, while he opened his arms to make them welcome, the only repast he set before them consisted of the roots of the earth. They could have wished for something more hearty and substantial; but, for want of better, made a voracious meal on these humble viands. The repast being over, the best pipe was lighted and sent round: and this was a most welcome luxury, having lost their smoking apparatus twelve days before, among the mountains.

While they were thus enjoying themselves, their poor horses were led to the best pastures in the neighbourhood; where they were turned

loose to revel on the fresh sprouting grass: so that they had better fare than their masters.

Captain Bonneville soon felt himself quite at home, among these quiet, inoffensive people. His long residence among their cousins, the Upper Nez Percés, had made him conversant with their language, modes of expression, and all their habitudes. He soon found, too, that he was well known to them, by report at least, from the constant interchange of visits and messages between the two branches of the tribe. They at first addressed him by his name; giving him his title of captain, with a French accent: but they soon gave him a title of their own; which, as usual with Indian titles, had a peculiar signification. In the case of the captain, it had somewhat of a whimsical origin.

As he sat chatting and smoking in the midst of them, he would occasionally take off his cap.

Whenever he did so, there was a sensation in the surrounding circle. The Indians would half rise from their recumbent posture, and gaze upon his uncovered head, with their usual exclamation of astonishment.

The worthy captain was completely bald; a phenomenon very surprising in their eyes. They were at a loss to know whether he had been scalped in battle, or enjoyed a natural immunity from that belligerent infliction. In a little while, he became known among them by an Indian name, signifying "the bald chief." "A soubriquet," observes the captain, "for which I can find no parallel in history, since the days of 'Charles the Bald.'"

Although the travellers had banqueted on roots, and been regaled with tobacco smoke, yet, their stomachs craved more generous fare. In approaching the lodges of the Nez Percés, they had indulged in fond anticipations of

venison and dried salmon: and dreams of the kind still haunted their imaginations, and could not be conjured down. The keen appetites of mountain trappers, quickened by a fortnight's fasting, at length got the better of all scruples of pride, and they fairly begged some fish or flesh from the hospitable savages. The latter, however, were slow to break in upon their winter store, which was very limited: but were ready to furnish roots in abundance, which they pronounced excellent food.

At length, Captain Bonneville thought of a means of attaining the much coveted gratification.

He had about him, he says, a trusty plaid; an old and valued travelling companion and comforter; upon which the rains had descended, and the snows and winds beaten, without further effect than somewhat to tarnish its primitive lustre. This coat of many colours

had excited the admiration, and inflamed the covetousness of both warriors and squaws, to an extravagant degree. An idea now occurred to Captain Bonneville, to convert this rainbow garment into the savoury viands so much desired. There was a momentary struggle in his mind, between old associations and projected indulgence; and his decision in favour of the latter was made, he says, with a greater promptness, perhaps, than true taste and sentiment might have required.

In a few moments, his plaid cloak was cut into numerous strips. "Of these," continues he, "with the newly developed talent of a man-milliner, I speedily constructed turbans *à la Turque*, and fanciful head-gears of divers conformations. These, judiciously distributed among such of the women-kind as seemed of most consequence and interest in the eyes of

the *patres conscripti*, brought us, in a little while, abundance of dried salmon and deer's hearts; on which we made a sumptuous supper. Another, and a more satisfactory smoke, succeeded this repast; and sweet slumbers answering the peaceful invocation of our pipes, wrapped us in that delicious rest, which is only won by toil and travail."

As to Captain Bonneville, he slept in the lodge of the venerable patriarch, who had evidently conceived a most disinterested affection for him; as was shown on the following morning.

The travellers, invigorated by a good supper, and "fresh from the bath of repose," were about to resume their journey, when this affectionate old chief took the captain aside, to let him know how much he loved him. As a proof of his regard, he had determined to give

him a fine horse; which would go further than words, and put his good-will beyond all question.

So saying, he made a signal, and forthwith a beautiful young horse, of a brown colour, was led prancing and snorting, to the place. Captain Bonneville was suitably affected by this mark of friendship; but his experience in what is proverbially called "Indian giving," made him aware that a parting pledge was necessary on his own part, to prove that this friendship was reciprocated. He accordingly placed a handsome rifle in the hands of the venerable chief; whose benevolent heart was evidently touched and gratified by this outward and visible sign of amity.

The worthy captain having now, as he thought, balanced this little account of friendship, was about to shift his saddle to this noble gift-horse when the affectionate patriarch plucked

him by the sleeve and introduced to him a whimpering whining, leathern-skinned old squaw, that might have passed for an Egyptian mummy, without drying.

"This," said he, "is my wife; she is a good wife—I love her very much.—She loves the horse—she loves him a great deal—she will cry very much at losing him.—I do not know how I shall comfort her—and that makes my heart very sore."

What could the worthy captain do, to console the tender-hearted old squaw; and, peradventure, to save the venerable patriarch from a curtain lecture? He bethought himself of a pair of earbobs: it was true, the patriarch's better-half was of an age and appearance that seemed to put personal vanity out of the question: but when is personal vanity extinct? The moment he produced the glittering earbobs, the whimpering and whining of the sempiternal

beldame was at an end. She eagerly placed the precious baubles in her ears, and, though as ugly as the Witch of Endor, went off with a sideling gait, and coquettish air, as though she had been a perfect Semiramis.

The captain had now saddled his newly acquired steed, and his foot was in the stirrup, when the affectionate patriarch again stepped forward, and presented to him a young Pierced-nose, who had a peculiarly sulky look.

"This," said the venerable chief, "is my son; he is very good; a great horseman—he always took care of this very fine horse—he brought him up from a colt, and made him what he is.—He is very fond of this fine horse—he loves him like a brother—his heart will be very heavy when this fine horse leaves the camp."

What could the captain do, to reward the youthful hope of this venerable pair, and comfort him for the loss of his fosterbrother, the

horse? He bethought him of a hatchet, which might be spared from his slender stores. No sooner did he place the implement in the hands of young hopeful, than his countenance brightened up, and he went off rejoicing in his hatchet, to the full as much as did his respectable mother in her earbobs.

The captain was now in the saddle, and about to start, when the affectionate old patriarch stepped forward for the third time, and, while he laid one hand gently on the mane of the horse, held up the rifle in the other.

"This rifle," said he, "shall be my great medicine. I will hug it to my heart—I will always love it, for the sake of my good friend, the bald-headed chief.—But a rifle, by itself, is dumb—I cannot make it speak. If I had a little powder and ball, I would take it out with me, and would now and then shoot a deer: and when I brought the meat home to my

hungry family, I would say—this was killed by the rifle of my friend, the bald-headed chief, to whom I gave that very fine horse."

There was no resisting this appeal: the captain, forthwith, furnished the coveted supply of powder and ball; but at the same time, put spurs to his very fine gift-horse, and the first trial of his speed was to get out of all further manifestation of friendship, on the part of the affectionate old patriarch and his insinuating family.

CHAPTER XV.

NEZ PERCE CAMP—A CHIEF WITH A HARD NAME—THE BIG HEARTS OF THE EAST—HOSPITABLE TREATMENT—THE INDIAN GUIDES—MYSTERIOUS COUNCILS—THE LOQUACIOUS CHIEF—INDIAN TOMB—GRAND INDIAN RECEPTION—AN INDIAN FEAST—TOWN CRIERS—HONESTY OF THE NEZ PERCES—THE CAPTAIN'S ATTEMPT AT HEALING.

Following the course of the Immahah, Captain Bonneville and his three companions soon reached the vicinity of Snake river. Their route now lay over a succession of steep and isolated hills, with profound valleys. On the second day, after taking leave of the affectionate old patriarch, as they were descending

into one of those deep and abrupt intervales, they descried a smoke, and shortly afterwards came in sight of a small encampment of Nez Percés.

The Indians, when they ascertained that it was a party of white men approaching, greeted them with a salute of fire-arms, and invited them to encamp. This band was likewise under the sway of a venerable chief named Yo-mus-ro-y-e-cut; a name which we shall be careful not to inflict oftener than is necessary upon the reader. This ancient and hard-named chieftain, welcomed Captain Bonneville to his camp with the same hospitality and loving kindness that he had experienced from his predecessor. He told the captain that he had often heard of the Americans and their generous deeds, and that his Buffalo brethren (the Upper Nez Percés), had always spoken of

them as the Big-hearted whites of the East, the very good friends of the Nez Percés.

Captain Bonneville felt somewhat uneasy under the responsibility of this magnanimous but costly appellation; and began to fear he might be involved in a second interchange of pledges of friendship. He hastened, therefore, to let the old chief know his poverty-stricken state, and how little there was to be expected from him.

He informed him that he and his comrades had long resided among the Upper Nez Percés, and loved them so much, that they had thrown their arms around them, and now held them close to their hearts. That he had received such good accounts from the Upper Nez Percés of their cousins, the Lower Nez Percés, that he had become desirous of knowing them as friends and brothers. That he and his com-

panions had accordingly loaded a mule with presents and set off for the country of the Lower Nez Percés; but, unfortunately, had been entrapped for many days among the snowy mountains; and that the mule with all the presents had fallen into Snake river, and been swept away by the rapid current. That instead, therefore, of arriving among their friends, the Nez Percés, with light hearts and full hands, they came naked, hungry, and broken down; and instead of making them presents, must depend upon them even for food.

"But," concluded he, "we are going to the white men's fort on the Wallah-Wallah, and will soon return; and then we will meet our Nez Percé friends like the Big-hearts of the East."

Whether the hint thrown out in the latter part of the speech had any effect, or whether

the old chief acted from the hospitable feelings which, according to the captain, are really inherent in the Nez Percé tribe, he certainly showed no disposition to relax his friendship on learning the destitute circumstances of his guests. On the contrary, he urged the captain to remain with them until the following day, when he would accompany him on his journey, and make him acquainted with all his people. In the mean time he would have a colt killed, and cut up for travelling provisions. This, he carefully explained, was intended not as an article of traffic, but as a gift; for he saw that his guests were hungry and in need of food.

Captain Bonneville gladly assented to this hospitable arrangement. The carcass of the colt was forthcoming in due season, but the captain insisted that one half of it should be set apart for the use of the chieftain's family.

At an early hour of the following morning,

the little party resumed their journey, accompanied by the old chief and an Indian guide. Their route was over a rugged and broken country; where the hills were slippery with ice and snow. Their horses, too, were so weak and jaded, that they could scarcely climb the steep ascents, or maintain their foothold on the frozen declivities.

Throughout the whole of the journey, the old chief and the guide were unremitting in their good offices, and continually on the alert to select the best roads, and assist them through all difficulties. Indeed, the captain and his comrades had to be dependant on their Indian friends for almost every thing, for they had lost their tobacco and pipes, those great comforts of the trapper, and had but a few charges of powder left, which it was necessary to husband for the purpose of lighting their fires.

In the course of the day the old chief had several private consultations with the guide, and showed evident signs of being occupied with some mysterious matter of mighty import. What it was Captain Bonneville could not fathom, nor did he make much effort to do so. From some casual sentences that he overheard, he perceived that it was something from which the old man promised himself much satisfaction, and to which he attached a little vainglory, but which he wished to keep a secret; so he suffered him to spin out his petty plans unmolested.

In the evening when they encamped, the old chief and his privy counsellor, the guide, had another mysterious colloquy, after which the guide mounted his horse and departed on some secret mission, while the chief resumed his seat at the fire, and sat humming to himself in a pleasing but mystic reverie.

The next morning, the travellers descended into the valley of the Way-lee-way, a considerable tributary of Snake river. Here they met the guide returning from his secret errand. Another private conference was held between him and the old managing chief, who now seemed more inflated than ever with mystery and self-importance. Numerous fresh trails, and various other signs, persuaded Captain Bonneville that there must be a considerable village of Nez Percés in the neighbourhood; but as his worthy companion, the old chief, said nothing on the subject, and as it appeared to be in some way connected with his secret operations, he asked no questions, but patiently awaited the development of his mystery.

As they journeyed on, they came to where two or three Indians were bathing in a small stream. The good old chief immediately came to a halt, and had a long conversation with

them, in the course of which, he repeated to them the whole history which Captain Bonneville had related to him. In fact, he seems to have been a very sociable, communicative old man; by no means afflicted with that taciturnity generally charged upon the Indians. On the contrary, he was fond of long talks and long smokings, and evidently was proud of his new friend, the bald-headed chief, and took á pleasure in sounding his praises, and setting forth the power and glory of the Big Hearts of the East.

Having disburdened himself of every thing he had to relate to his bathing friends, he left them to their aquatic disports, and proceeded onward with the captain and his companions.

As they approached the Way-lee-way, however, the communicative old chief met with another and a very different occasion to exert

his colloquial powers. On the banks of the river stood an isolated mound covered with grass. He pointed to it with some emotion. "The big heart and the strong arm," said he, "lie buried beneath that sod."

It was, in fact, the grave of one of his friends; a chosen warrior of the tribe; who had been slain on this spot when in pursuit of a war party of Shoshokoes, who had stolen the horses of the village. The enemy bore off his scalp as a trophy; but his friends found his body in this lonely place, and committed it to the earth with ceremonials characteristic of their pious and reverential feelings. They gathered round the grave and mourned; the warriors were silent in their grief; but the women and children bewailed their loss with loud lamentations.

"For three days," said the old man, "we performed the solemn dances for the dead, and

prayed the Great Spirit that our brother might be happy in the land of brave warriors and hunters. Then we killed at his grave fifteen of our best and strongest horses, to serve him when he should arrive at the happy hunting grounds; and having done all this, we returned sorrowfully to our homes."

While the chief was still talking, an Indian scout came galloping up, and, presenting him with a powder-horn, wheeled round, and was speedily out of sight. The eyes of the old chief now brightened; and all his self-importance returned. His petty mystery was about to explode. Turning to Captain Bonneville, he pointed to a hill hard by, and informed him, that behind it was a village governed by a little chief, whom he had notified of the approach of the bald-headed chief, and a party of the Big Hearts of the East, and that he was prepared to receive them in becoming style. As, among

other ceremonials, he intended to salute them with a discharge of fire-arms, he had sent the horn of gunpowder that they might return the salute in a manner correspondent to his dignity.

They now proceeded on until they doubled the point of the hill, when the whole population of the village broke upon their view, drawn out in the most imposing style, and arrayed in all their finery. The effect of the whole was wild and fantastic, yet singularly striking. In the front rank were the chiefs and principal warriors, glaringly painted and decorated; behind them were arranged the rest of the people, men, women, and children.

Captain Bonneville and his party advanced slowly, exchanging salutes of fire-arms. When arrived within a respectful distance they dismounted. The chiefs then came forward successively, according to their respective charac-

ters and consequence, to offer the hand of good-fellowship; each filing off when he had shaken hands, to make way for his successor. Those in the next rank followed in the same order, and so on, until all had given the pledge of friendship.

During all this time, the chief, according to custom, took his stand beside the guests. If any of his people advanced whom he judged unworthy of the friendship or confidence of the white men, he motioned them off by a wave of the hand, and they would submissively walk away. When Captain Bonneville turned upon him an inquiring look, he would observe, "he is a bad man," or something quite as concise, and there was an end of the matter.

Mats, poles, and other materials were now brought, and a comfortable lodge was soon erected for the strangers, where they were kept constantly supplied with wood and wa-

ter, and other necessaries; and all their effects were placed in safe keeping. Their horses, too, were unsaddled, and turned loose to graze, and a guard set to keep watch upon them.

All this being adjusted, they were conducted to the main building or council house of the village, where an ample repast, or rather banquet, was spread, which seemed to realize all the gastronomical dreams that had tantalized them during their late starvation; for here they beheld not merely fish and roots in abundance, but the flesh of deer and elk, and the choicest pieces of buffalo meat. It is needless to say how vigorously they acquitted themselves on this occasion, and how needless it was for their hosts to practise the usual cramming principle of Indian hospitality.

When the repast was over, a long talk

ensued. The chief showed the same curiosity evinced by his tribe generally, to obtain information concerning the United States, of whom they knew little but what they derived through their cousins, the Upper Nez Percés; as their traffic is almost exclusively with the British traders of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Captain Bonneville did his best to set forth the merits of his nation, and the importance of their friendship to the red men, in which he was ably seconded by his worthy friend, the old chief with the hard name, who did all that he could to glorify the Big Hearts of the East.

The chief, and all present, listened with profound attention, and evidently with great interest; nor were the important facts thus set forth, confined to the audience in the lodge; for sentence after sentence was loudly

repeated by a crier for the benefit of the whole village.

This custom of promulgating every thing by criers, is not confined to the Nez Percés, but prevails among many other tribes. It has its advantage where there are no gazettes to publish the news of the day, or to report the proceedings of important meetings. And in fact, reports of this kind, *viva voce*, made in the hearing of all parties, and liable to be contradicted or corrected on the spot, are more likely to convey accurate information to the public mind, than those circulated through the press.

The office of crier is generally filled by some old man, who is good for little else. A village has generally several of these walking newspapers, as they are termed by the whites, who go about proclaiming the news of the day, giving notice of public councils;

expeditions, dances, feasts, and other ceremonials, and advertising any thing lost. While Captain Bonneville remained among the Nez Percés, if a glove, handkerchief, or any thing of similar value, was lost or mislaid, it was carried by the finder to the lodge of the chief, and proclamation was made by one of their criers, for the owner to come and claim his property.

How difficult it is to get at the true character of these wandering tribes of the wilderness! In a recent work, we have had to speak of this tribe of Indians from the experience of other traders who had casually been among them, and who represented them as selfish, inhospitable, exorbitant in their dealings, and much addicted to thieving :* Captain Bonneville, on the contrary, who

* Vide Astoria, vol. ii., chap. xxii.

resided much among them, and had repeated opportunities of ascertaining their real character, invariably speaks of them as kind and hospitable, scrupulously honest, and remarkable, above all other Indians that he had met with, for a strong feeling of religion. In fact, so enthusiastic is he in their praise, that he pronounces them, all ignorant and barbarous as they are by their condition, one of the purest-hearted people on the face of the earth.

Some cures which Captain Bonneville had effected in simple cases among the Upper Nez Percés, had reached the ears of their cousins here, and gained for him the reputation of a great medicine man. He had not been long in the village, therefore, before his lodge began to be the resort of the sick and the infirm. The captain felt the value of the reputation thus accidentally and cheaply

acquired, and endeavoured to sustain it. As he had arrived at that age when every man is, experimentally, something of a physician, he was enabled to turn to advantage the little knowledge in the healing art, which he had casually picked up; and was sufficiently successful in two or three cases, to convince the simple Indians that report had not exaggerated his medical talents.

The only patient that effectually baffled his skill, or rather discouraged any attempt at relief, was an antiquated squaw with a churchyard cough, and one leg in the grave; it being shrunk and rendered useless by a rheumatic affection. This was a case beyond his mark; however, he comforted the old woman with a promise that he would endeavour to procure something to relieve her, at the fort on the Wallah-Wallah, and would bring it on his return; with which assurance

her husband was so well satisfied, that he presented the captain with a colt, to be killed as provisions for the journey: a medical fee which was thankfully accepted.

While among these Indians, Captain Bonneville unexpectedly found an owner for the horse which he had purchased from a Root Digger at the Big Wyer. The Indian satisfactorily proved that the horse had been stolen from him some time previous, by some unknown thief.

"However," said the considerate savage, "you got him in fair trade—you are more in want of horses than I am: keep him; he is yours—he is a good horse; use him well."

Thus, in the continual experience of acts of kindness and generosity, which his destitute condition did not allow him to reciprocate, Captain Bonneville passed some short

time among these good people, more and more impressed with the general excellence of their character.

CHAPTER XVI.

SCENERY OF THE WAY-LEE-WAY—A SUBSTITUTE FOR TOBACCO—SUBLIME SCENERY OF SNAKE RIVER—THE GARRULOUS OLD CHIEF AND HIS COUSIN—A NEZ PERCE MEETING — A STOLEN SKIN — THE SCAPEGOAT DOG—MYSTERIOUS CONFERENCES—THE LITTLE CHIEF —HIS HOSPITALITY—THE CAPTAIN'S ACCOUNT OF THE UNITED STATES—HIS HEALING SKILL.

In resuming his journey, Captain Bonneville was conducted by the same Nez Percé guide, whose knowledge of the country was important in choosing the routes and resting-places. He also continued to be accompanied by the worthy old chief with the hard name, who seemed bent upon doing the honours of the country,

and introducing him to every branch of his tribe.

The Way-lee-way, down the banks of which, Captain Bonneville and his companions were now travelling, is a considerable stream winding through a succession of bold and beautiful scenes. Sometimes the landscape towered into bold and mountainous heights that partook of sublimity; at other times, it stretched along the water side in fresh smiling meadows, and graceful undulating valleys.

Frequently in their route they encountered small parties of the Nez Percés, with whom they invariably stopped to shake hands; and who, generally, evinced great curiosity concerning them and their adventures; a curiosity which never failed to be thoroughly satisfied by the replies of the worthy Yo-mus-ro-y-e-cut, who kindly took upon himself to be spokesman of the party.

The incessant smoking of pipes incident to the long talks of this excellent, but somewhat garrulous old chief, at length exhausted all his stock of tobacco, so that he had no longer a whiff with which to regale his white companions. In this emergency, he cut up the stem of his pipe into fine shavings, which he mixed with certain herbs, and thus manufactured a temporary succedaneum, to enable him to accompany his long colloquies and harangues with the customary fragrant cloud.

If the scenery of the Way-lee-way had charmed the travellers with its mingled amenity and grandeur, that which broke upon them on once more reaching Snake river, filled them with admiration and astonishment. At times, the river was overhung by dark and stupendous rocks, rising like gigantic walls and battlements; these would be rent by wide and yawning chasms, that seemed to speak of past

convulsions of nature. Sometimes the river was of a glassy smoothness and placidity; at other times it roared along in impetuous rapids and foaming cascades. Here, the rocks were piled in the most fantastic crags and precipices; and in another place, they were succeeded by delightful valleys carpeted with green sward.

The whole of this wild and varied scenery was dominated by immense mountains rearing their distant peaks into the clouds.

"The grandeur and originality of the views, presented on every side," says Captain Bonneville, "beggar both the pencil and the pen. Nothing we had ever gazed upon in any other region could for a moment compare in wild majesty and impressive sternness, with the series of scenes which here at every turn astonished our senses, and filled us with awe and delight."

Indeed, from all that we can gather from the

journal before us, and the accounts of other travellers, who passed through these regions in the memorable enterprise of Astoria, we are inclined to think that Snake river must be one of the most remarkable for varied and striking scenery of all the rivers of this continent. From its head waters in the Rocky mountains, to its junction with the Columbia, its windings are upwards of six hundred miles through every variety of landscape. Rising in a volcanic region, amidst extinguished craters, and mountains awful with the traces of ancient fires, it makes its way through great plains of lava and sandy deserts, penetrates vast sierras or mountainous chains, broken into romantic and often frightful precipices, and crowned with eternal snows; and at other times, careers through green and smiling meadows, and wide landscapes of Italian grace and beauty. Wild-

ness and sublimity, however, appear to be its prevailing characteristics.

Captain Bonneville and his companions had pursued their journey a considerable distance down the course of Snake river, when the old chief halted on the bank, and dismounting, recommended that they should turn their horses loose to graze, while he summoned a cousin of his from a group of lodges on the opposite side of the stream.

His summons was quickly answered. An Indian of an active, elastic form, leaped into a light canoe of cotton-wood, and vigorously plying the paddle, soon shot across the river. Bounding on shore, he advanced with a buoyant air and frank demeanour, and gave his right hand to each of the party in turn.

The old chief, whose hard name we forbear to repeat, now presented Captain Bonneville,

in form to his cousin, whose name, we regret to say, was no less hard, being nothing less than Hay-she-in-cow-cow. The latter evinced the usual curiosity to know all about the strangers, whence they came, whither they were going, the object of their journey, and the adventures they had experienced. All these, of course, were amply and eloquently set forth by the communicative old chief. To all his grandiloquent account of the bald-headed chief and his countrymen, the Big Hearts of the East, his cousin listened with great attention, and replied in the customary style of Indian welcome. He then desired the party to await his return, and, springing into his canoe, darted across the river.

In a little while he returned, bringing a most welcome supply of tobacco, and a small stock of provisions for the road, delaring his intention of accompanying the party. Having no

horse, he mounted behind one of the men, observing that he should procure a steed for himself on the following day.

They all now jogged on very sociably and cheerfully together. Not many miles beyond, they met others of the tribe, among whom was one, whom Captain Bonneville and his comrades had known during their residence among the Upper Nez Percés, and who welcomed them with open arms. In this neighbourhood was the home of their guide, who took leave of them with a profusion of good wishes for their safety and happiness. That night they put up in the hut of a Nez Percé, where they were visited by several warriors from the other side of the river, friends of the old chief and his cousin, who came to have a talk and a smoke with the white men.

The heart of the good old chief was overflowing with good-will at thus being sur-

rounded by his new and old friends, and he talked with more spirit and vivacity than ever. The evening passed away in perfect harmony and good humour, and it was not until a late hour that the visiters took their leave and recrossed the river.

After this constant picture of worth and virtue on the part of the Nez Percé tribe, we grieve to have to record a circumstance calculated to throw a temporary shade upon the name. In the course of the social and harmonious evening just mentioned, one of the captain's men, who happened to be something of a virtuoso in his way, and fond of collecting curiosities, produced a small skin, a great rarity in the eyes of men conversant in peltries. It attracted much attention among the visiters from beyond the river, who passed it from one to the other, examined it with

looks of lively admiration, and pronounced it a great medicine.

In the morning when the captain and his party were about to set off, the precious skin was missing. Search was made for it in the hut, but it was nowhere to be found; and it was strongly suspected that it had been purloined by some of the connoisseurs from the other side of the river.

The old chief and his cousin were indignant at the supposed delinquency of their friends across the water, and called out for them to come over and answer for their shameful conduct. The others answered to the call with all the promptitude of perfect innocence, and spurned at the idea of their being capable of such outrage upon any of the Big-hearted nation. All were at a loss on whom to fix the crime of abstracting the invaluable skin,

when by chance the eyes of the worthies from beyond the water, fell upon an unhappy cur, belonging to the owner of the hut. He was a gallows-looking dog, but not more so than most Indian dogs, who, take them in the mass, are little better than a generation of vipers. Be that as it may, he was instantly accused of having devoured the skin in question.

A dog accused is generally a dog condemned; and a dog condemned is generally a dog executed. So was it in the present instance. The unfortunate cur was arraigned; his thievish looks substantiated his guilt, and he was condemned by his judges from across the river to be hanged. In vain the Indians of the hut, with whom he was a great favourite, interceded in his behalf. In vain Captain Bonneville and his comrades peti-

tioned that his life might be spared. His judges were inexorable. He was doubly guilty: first, in having robbed their good friends, the Big Hearts of the East; secondly, in having brought a doubt on the honour of the Nez Percé tribe. He was accordingly, swung aloft, and pelted with stones to make his death more certain.

The sentence of the judges being thus thoroughly executed, a *post mortem* examination of the body of the dog was held, to establish his delinquency beyond all doubt, and to leave the honour of the Nez Percés without a shadow of suspicion.

Great interest, of course, was manifested by all present during this operation. The body of the dog was opened, the intestines rigorously scrutinized, but, to the horror of all concerned, not a particle of the skin was

to be found—the dog had been unjustly executed!

A great clamour now ensued, but the most clamorous was the party from across the river, whose jealousy of their good name now prompted them to the most vociferous vindications of their innocence. It was with the utmost difficulty that the captain and his comrades could calm their lively sensibilities, by accounting for the disappearance of the skin in a dozen different ways, until all idea of its having been stolen was entirely out of the question.

The meeting now broke up. The warriors returned across the river, the captain and his comrades proceeded on their journey; but the spirits of the communicative old ch Yo-mus-ro-y-e-cut, were for a time completely dampened, and he evinced great mortification at what had just occurred. He rode on in

silence, except, that now and then he would give way to a burst of indignation, and exclaim, with a shake of the head and a toss of the hand toward the opposite shore—"bad men, very bad men across the river;" to each of which brief exclamations, his worthy cousin, Hay-she-in-cow-cow, would respond by a deep guttural sound of acquiescence, equivolent to an amen.

After some time, the countenance of the old chief again cleared up, and he fell into repeated conferences, in an under tone, with his cousin, which ended in the departure of the latter, who applying the lash to his horse, dashed forward and was soon out of sight. In fact, they were drawing near to the village of another chief, likewise distinguished by an appellation of some longitude, namely, O-push-y-e-cut; but commonly known as the great chief. The cousin had been sent ahead

to give notice of their approach; a herald appeared as before, bearing a powderhorn, to enable them to respond to the intended salute.

A scene ensued, on their approach to the village, similar to that which had occurred at the village of the little chief. The whole population appeared in the field, drawn up in lines, arrayed with the customary regard to rank and dignity. Then came on the firing of salutes, and the shaking of hands, in which last ceremonial, every individual, man, woman, and child, participated; for the Indians have an idea that it is as indispensable an overture to friendship among the whites as smoking of the pipe is among the red men.

The travellers were next ushered to the banquet, where all the choicest viands that

the village could furnish, were served up in rich profusion. They were afterwards entertained by feats of agility and horse-races; indeed, their visit to the village seemed the signal for complete festivity. In the mean time, a skin lodge had been spread for their accommodation, their horses and baggage taken care of, and wood and water supplied in abundance.

At night, therefore, they retired to their quarters, to enjoy, as they supposed, the repose of which they stood in need. No such thing, however, was in store for them. A crowd of visiters awaited their appearance, all eager for a smoke and a talk. The pipe was immediately lighted, and constantly replenished and kept alive until the night was far advanced. As usual, the utmost eagerness was evinced by the guests to learn every thing within the scope of

their comprehension respecting the Americans, for whom they professed the most fraternal regard.

The captain, in his replies, made use of familiar illustrations, calculated to strike their minds, and impress them with such an idea of the might of his nation, as would induce them to treat with kindness and respect all stragglers that might fall in their path.

To their inquiries as to the numbers of the people of the United States, he assured them that they were as countless as the blades of grass in the prairies, and that, great as Snake river was, if they were all encamped upon its banks, they would drink it dry in a single day. To these and similar statistics, they listened with profound attention, and apparently, implicit belief.

It was, indeed, a striking scene: the captain, with his hunter's dress and bald head in the

midst, holding forth, and his wild auditors seated around like so many statues, the fire lighting up their painted faces and muscular figures, all fixed and motionless, excepting when the pipe was passed, a question propounded, or a startling fact in statistics received with a movement of surprise and a half suppressed ejaculation of wonder and delight.

The fame of the captain as a healer of diseases, had accompanied him to this village, and the great chief, O-push-y-e-cut, now entreated him to exert his skill on his daughter, who had been for three days racked with pains, for which the Pierced-nose doctors could devise no alleviation. The captain found her extended on a pallet of mats in excruciating pain. Her father manifested the strongest paternal affection for her, and assured the captain that if he would but cure her, he would place the Americans near his heart.

The worthy captain needed no such inducement. His kind heart was already touched by the sufferings of the poor girl, and his sympathies quickened by her appearance: for she was but about sixteen years of age, and uncommonly beautiful in form and feature. The only difficulty with the captain was, that he knew nothing of her malady, and that his medical science was of the most haphazard kind.

After considering and cogitating for some time, as a man is apt to do when in a maze of vague ideas, he made a desperate dash at a remedy. By his directions, the girl was placed in a sort of rude vapour-bath, much used by the Nez Percés, where she was kept until near fainting. He then gave her a dose of gunpowder dissolved in cold water, and ordered her to be wrapped in buffalo robes and put to sleep under a load of furs and blankets.

The remedy succeeded: the next morning

she was free from pain, though extremely lan guid; whereupon, the captain prescribed for her a bowl of colt's head broth, and that she should be kept for a time on simple diet.

The great chief was unbounded in his expressions of gratitude for the recovery of his daughter. He would fain have detained the captain a long time as his guest, but the time for departure had arrived.

When the captain's horse was brought for him to mount, the chief declared that the steed was not worthy of him, and sent for one of his best horses, which he presented in its stead; declaring that it made his heart glad to see his friend so well mounted. He then appointed a young Nez Percé to accompany his guests to the next village, and "to carry his talk" concerning them; and the two parties separated with mutual expressions of kindness and feelings of good-will.

The vapour bath of which we have made mention is in frequent use among the Nez Percé tribe, chiefly for cleanliness. Their sweating houses, as they call them, are small and close lodges, and the vapour is produced by water poured slowly upon redhot stones.

On passing the limits of O-push-y-e-cut's domains, the travellers left the elevated table lands, and all the wild and romantic scenery which has just been described. They now traversed a gently undulating country, of such fertility that it excited the rapturous admiration of two of the captain's followers, a Kentuckian and a native of Ohio. They declared that it surpassed any land they had ever seen, and often exclaimed, what a delight it would be just to run a plough through such a rich and teeming soil, and see it open its bountiful promise before the share.

Another halt and sojourn of a night was

made at the village of a chief named He-mim-el-pilp, where similar ceremonies were observed and hospitality experienced, as at the preceding villages.

They now pursued a west-southwest course through a most beautiful and fertile region, better wooded than most of the tracts through which they had passed. In their progress, they met with several bands of Nez Percés, by whom they were invariably treated with the utmost kindness. Within seven days after leaving the domain of He-mim-el-pilp, they struck the Columbia river at Fort Wallah-Wallah, where they arrived on the 4th of March, 1834.

END OF VOL. II.

WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.